

Chapter 9

September, 1944—March, 1945

September, 1944—France [V-letter, not dated, written just before Eddie was wounded]

Hello Ray,

It's been a long time since I have written you, but you know how it is over here... always moving. I guess you know I am over here in France and it is that much harder to be writing all the time. I try and write to Pop and the girls every chance I get. I am glad to know everything is fine at home. It is really a great satisfaction to know that this war is being fought over here instead of back home. I have seen many things since I have been over here, things that I couldn't put in a letter because of the censor. France is a beautiful country but the war has ruined the towns and cities over here.

I guess Brother is back there and is already married. I received a letter from him just before he left from over here. He said that was first thing he was going to do. The way it looks over here it won't be long before this war is over. Paris was taken the other day and it won't be long before we are in Berlin.

That's all for now. Take care of yourself and may God watch over you.

As ever, Ed

PS: Johnny Ryan knew about what you wrote. He said everything was all right, that the baby was baptized. [No idea what this means.]

[Billee and Charles were living in New York City, while Charles was assigned to the New York Bureau of the Stars and Stripes. Charles had gone to St. Louis to cover the World Series.]

October 2, 1944—New York

Darlin',

Just couldn't help it... have to dash off a few lines. I just finished the wash and a letter to Mom and when I say goodnight to you, I'm going to sleep.

Do you suppose I'm missing you already? Seems as if I ought to be hearing your key in the lock about now.

Time will pass quickly because I know you'll be back in just a few days. Still, suddenly this 2x4 seems awfully big.

I'm going to sleep until I wake by myself in the morning. That's why I did the wash tonight. Jane and Benny were outside the grocery store when I got back to 14th and 7th. They tried to talk me into a

double feature but I said no. Besides, I had a date with you.

I don't mind being alone so much when I can't be with you. I always could find you and be closer to you when I was alone. I didn't like the idea of losing you in a crowd... not losing you but having people try to push you to the back of my mind.

I have a few things I've been wanting to get done and this will be a good opportunity.

I know, though, when I go to crawl into bed and you aren't there to tuck me in that it's going to hit home.

Funny thing how much I love you. Not so funny sometimes but I wouldn't trade places with anyone. I don't say so much, but you seem to know how I feel and that's most important. I like to nice comfortable silences we have now and then. Have you noticed?

My first letter as Mrs. K. Don't have to say, "the future Mrs. K." anymore. I find myself groping for words... so much I could say, and no words.

Please, don't laugh but I am falling asleep. I'll say goodnight. I love you.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

PS: You forgot the identification bracelet.

October 2, 1944—St. Louis

Hello sweetheart,

Now that I'm an ol' married man I feel I am qualified to take a few more liberties than I did when we were 'a courtin'.' Sooo... this 'hello' by typewriter, written in Room 335, Northside YMCA, St. Louis, Mo., USA, Earth.

The trip down was swell. Slept soundly in my lower [berth on the train] while a couple of captains and majors plus divers civilians curled up in chairs in the club car. I met a navigator just back from Italy, a captain from Kentucky, a sergeant from Panama, a father of three sons in the Navy and Ray



Jane and Ben Price with Billee at West Point, September 1944



Billee at West Point, September 1944 (picture by Ben Price)

Starr, Pirate pitcher who got the train in Philly and was on his way to take in the Series. Couldn't find me a bunny to share that lower, though.

I arrived at 5 p.m., took a cab to the 'Y' and checked in at \$2.50 a day. It's directly across the street from the ball park but about 15 minutes on a bus to the center of town where press HQ is located.

After dinner in a restaurant across the street I stopped in to see that "Dr. Wassell" you recommended. Perhaps I was tired but the picture got so bad I walked out at the point where those who couldn't walk started to fall all over the place trying to get aboard a ship that was going home. Mr. Cooper was a favorite of mine but these last two pictures.... hmmm, stinky. Didn't even care whether or not he finally got back with Lorraine Day.

I was in bed by 11:00 and suddenly realized what was the matter with me. It was not having you with me. I've been on lots of trains by myself before, been away by myself but all during the train trip there was something wrong. And then tonight.

guess I realized it when I couldn't reach over and ask you to come over to my house for a visit.

That explains why I'm here writing to you. I got up, had a smoke and opened the typewriter. It wasn't that it didn't occur to me to write to you because I figured to do it first thing in the morning and catch the morning mail.

I'm sure I can sleep better now. Hope you missed me as much. I'll be back tomorrow. 'Bye.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, C.

'Night, sweetheart.

October 3, 1944—New York

All ready for bed and no one to tuck me in. It's not fair. Not complaining... just missing you. I didn't sleep so well last night. It was about 11:00 when I turned the light off and I went right to sleep but

awakened at 1:00 and then it was on and off all night. Seemed like you had to be there when I woke up.

Anyway, got up at 11:00. Isn't that awful? Did the ironing, straightened up the room, dusted and fixed my drawers a little neater.

I had brunch then and dressed to go out. I dropped some shoes off at the shoe repair and your trousers and my dress at the cleaners, went shopping up the street a bit, and then to 195. I helped Bette cook dinner. You'll laugh... we fixed a chicken that should have been fricasséed... was it tough... but I couldn't tell what kind of chicken it was all cut up.

I went to the dentist and what do you think he found? Nine cavities! Isn't that terrific? He did one front one tonight and I have to go back two more times. I can't figure that out. I went only a year ago and had them all checked and I think I only had three cavities then.

I went by to see Jane and Ben tonight but they were out so I came on home.

I got all ready to sew and discovered the foot control the makes the darn sewing machine go isn't here. Must still be at 195. I could cuss.

Your dad was released from the doctor... said his foot was ok. He put his shoe on yesterday for the first time.

Ray Roche's sister-in-law was buried this a.m.

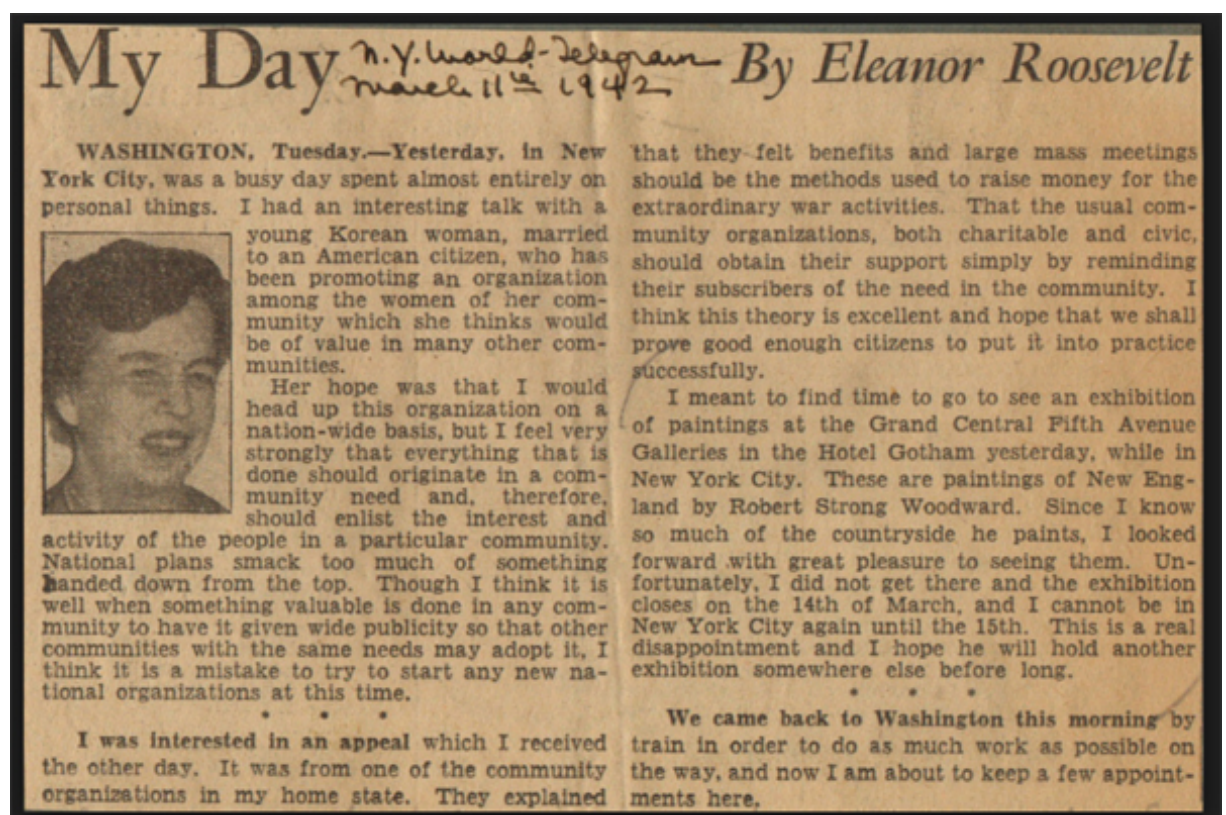
I don't like waking up by myself. I missed you waking me up and hearing you starting the coffee while I pretended I was still asleep... that's telling secrets. Now I'll have to get up first when you come home.

I tried to see Doctor Doyle tonight, too, just for a checkup but his office was mobbed and I had the other appointment.

So, that's "My Day." It's good and late now, and I'm sleepy. Maybe I'll sleep tonight for a change.

G'night. I love you so, and I'm missing you more than I can say.

All my love and kisses,
forever and always, your
Billee



"My Day" was the six-day-a-week newspaper column Eleanor Roosevelt wrote from December 30, 1935, until September 27, 1962.

October 3, 1944—St. Louis

Hello sweetheart,

Got all of my pre-Series work done today.

Climbed out of the sack at 9:30, went downtown for breakfast and stopped in at the Jefferson Hotel (Press HQ) and picked up my tickets and guest buttons. After roaming around town taking in the sights I had a light lunch and went to a matinee... "Impatient Years." Seems like my favorite pastime (aside from loving you) is going to the movies. I like the film lots.

About 4:00 I went back to the Jefferson, saw the Western Union people re my wire facilities and met a couple of NY writers... guy named Cohen from the mirror and Sid Mercer of the Journal-American.

Fished around for some dope on tomorrow's opener and learned Mort Cooper will toss 'em for the Cards and Nelson Potter for the Browns.

The Browns are the "peepul's cherce" as underdogs but the wise money is on the Cards. Me? I like the Cards in six games, probably five.

I haven't heard anything from Benny about a return ticket, etc., and if I don't hear by tomorrow or he can't give me anything on it when I call tomorrow night I'm going to try and make my own arrangements.

Miss you again today... lots.

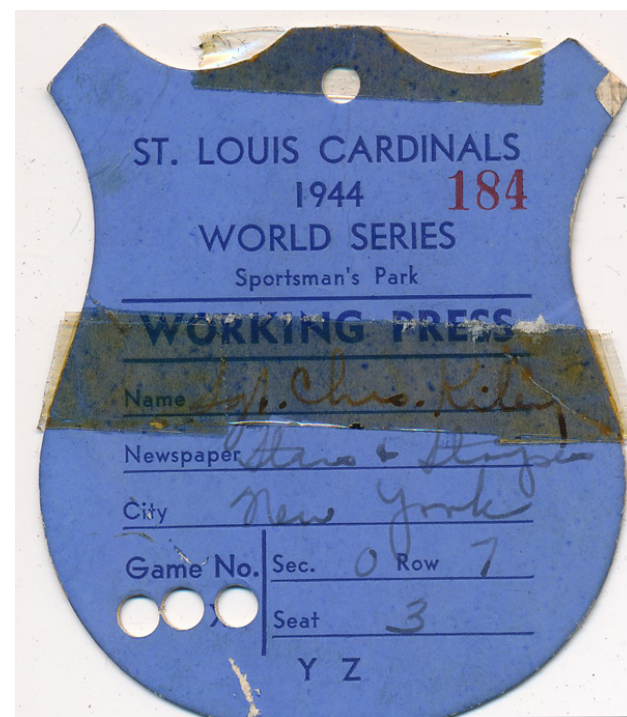
And now it's time to eat (still have a ravenous appetite).

See you in my dreams.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, C.

It's been warm and cloudy here all day. I sweltered in my ODs so tonight I wear the tans. Tomorrow at the game, too. Lots of fellows, in fact most, are still wearing tans here.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, C.



One of Charles' press tickets.

October 3, 1944—New York

Darlin'

Two days I can cross off. Tomorrow starts the big day... [start of the Series.] It's exactly 12:00 and I'm wide awake... not missing you, of course.

Dashed over to Jane and Ben's for a while after supper. I thought sure he would have some news from you, but no. All he kept telling me was how many telegrams and special deliveries he had sent you to make you look important.

We had hot fudge sundaes at the corner drug store and I called Dot from there. She wasn't home but Al was. I'm going over Saturday night, then I'll go to 195 to sleep and come back here in the afternoon.

They called the strike off at the shipyards and Al returned to work today, so that's over.

Marge [Marguerite Heuser] sent me a note telling me where she'd meet me Thursday, etc. She insists we eat out but I'd just as soon have dinner here. We'll see who wins.

I had a lousy day. They gave me practically all address changes on servicemen to do and I needed an interpreter. [Billee had gotten a job with Time magazine as an office worker.] Even with my imagination I was stumped on some of them. The result was I had a bad average today.

It's getting chilly here. We have heat, though. In fact, it nearly knocked me over tonight when I came in.

You remember what tomorrow is? My second anniversary [of being baptized a Catholic]. I'm going to 7:00 Mass in the morning. It's your anniversary, too... first raid over Germany. Something to remember.

I missed not finding you here when I came home... the table set if we were eating here, and the coffee made. Do you mind? I think you're awfully nice to come home to.

We're to go to [Phil] Bucknell's when you come home. They expect Bob [Moora] to be here by that time.

My eyes are tired, and it'll be early rising in the morning. Wish you were here to go with me. It's our anniversary, too. Two years and six months since that fatal Saturday night [when they were engaged]. Seems a long time ago, now.

Goodnight. I'll be a Cardinal or a Brown fan for life if they play it off in four straight ones. See you tomorrow. I love you... oh, so much.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

October 4, 1944—New York

Darling,

I can just see you walking out of the telephone booth shaking your head after that “screwy” bit of conversation we had. Makes me so mad I could chew nails. I had it all figured out what I wanted to say and when you said “hello, sweetheart,” I got all wobbly inside and my conversation went to the winds. Forgive me. I’ll do better Friday. I hope Benny remembers to send the wire tomorrow about changing the time.



Billee and Charles at West Point, September 1944

I had dinner with them tonight. Ben dashed right back to the office before we were finished.

He took a bad tumble down the subway stairs and knocked an old man down. His ankle is taped but you can see it’s all swollen. He was in his glory... stretched out on the sofa ordering Jane around to wait on him.

How’s come you don’t order me around? I wouldn’t mind it.

Benny sent the information concerning the return ticket in a special delivery sent to the Jefferson Hotel. He’s been sending all communications there... says it’s press headquarters.

At this stage of the game, I’m about ready to give up my household enthusiasm because I’m missing you something awful and this is only the third day. This has been the worst so far... today. I hope you aren’t missing me as much, else you won’t be able to write.

I think I wanted to tell you something else but I can’t remember. I’m sleepy... do you mind? Goodnight... I love you, oh, so much.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

You received a package from some girl in North Carolina... looks like it might be a cake or something. When is she going to let you alone?

I love you. B.

October 5, 1944—St. Louis

‘Lo sweetheart,

Although I’ve been swamped with mail (thanks to Benny’s bright ideas which somehow do not make sense to me) I had to wait until today to get what I needed most... your own great big chunks of heaven. Yes’m, all three came this morning and afternoon... the ones you wrote Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. They were just swell. In fact, you made me miss you so much I was almost tempted to chuck this job and head home. I hope this isn’t a fair example of what I can expect later. I thought I missed you while I was ‘cross the ocean but this beats everything. Damn good thing I’m not a traveling salesman.

There was one little item in one of the letters that I hesitate to talk about just now, I hesitate because I’m afraid to ask questions. I’ll wait until I get back so be prepared to answer right quick. It had to do with that visit to Jack Doyle. I’ll bet you knew what I’d think as soon as I read it, too!

Today’s game was a real thriller, the Cards winning out in the 11th to even the Series. I’m getting the stuff off okay but I know I’m missing a few things in the stories. You see, I work on the Series sidelights column during the game and as soon as it’s over I work on the lead story. Without time to think or check on a lot of angles I pass them up in the rush to get the piece on the wires and overseas as soon as possible. If I didn’t have to file until a couple of hours after the game time I could do a much better job. But that’s the business.

After the games I go downtown to the Jefferson Hotel where Press HQ is located, have dinner and a couple of drinks (on the Baseball Writers Association), sit around talking for a couple of hours and come home. Last night was spent chiefly in the company of a fellow from Newsweek. Tonight it was a man from I don’t know where or who he writes for and Stan Baumgartner of the Philly



Record. All I know about this man is that he is going to the Pacific pretty soon to do some war corresponding and that he has a son who just washed out of air cadet training.

Like you, I’m not having much luck with the sleeping department. I fall asleep easily enough but wake up during the night. Then while it’s scarcely daylight buzzers start buzzing all over this place. I learned today the buzz comes from the switchboard which buzzes various rooms on the floor to wake people up for work. Oh well, it could be worse.

I made a Pullman reservation today for next Wednesday the 11th. It was the only date with an opening. Of course, that will only fix me up if the Series goes six games. If it's more or less I'll get a coach home quick. After all, 22 hours sitting up isn't so long. Besides, I don't believe I could stay away from you any longer than I absolutely have to...

See you in dreamland, sweetheart. 'Bye for now.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, C.

October 5, 1944—New York

Happy anniversary. Seven weeks today... This is one you should have been home for... our seventh. Maybe this would have been lucky. You needn't laugh, either.

Marge didn't come in tonight so I went out to Dot's. Marty was there. Al's sick in bed with a stomach ailment so we girls talked and made Dorothy Jean a shirt... that is, Marty and Dot did. I caught the 11:30 bus home.

Marge is coming in Saturday and staying over Sunday, so I'll have a little company over the weekend.

I ate out tonight... Child's, the one we've been going to. I went to St. Patrick's to confession. I waited nearly an hour so it was too late to come back to the apartment and then go to Dot's, too, so I ate and caught the bus at the terminal.

I'm having Saturday off. Next Thursday is a holiday and since that week is going to be so busy and this week we have the work pretty well cleaned up, they decided to give us this Saturday off and make us work Columbus Day so I have a three day holiday and you aren't here. Darn.

I'll talk to you tomorrow night... a date, almost. I hate to complain but there was no letter tonight and I thought for sure there would be.

In tonight's News there's a paragraph about you that says you will return to Paris the week the Series ends. Please, do I have to read the paper to find out your goings and comings? My tummy got all funny when I read that. Please... not so soon.

I forgot to tell you.... Dot and Al have to go out Saturday night so that was why I went tonight.

Two Shortstops Hold Spotlight as Fielders

By Joe Trimble

St. Louis, Oct. 5.—As expected, the area around short-stop in this series has been as well covered as an Eskimo's ears in a blizzard. The Octopus, which is Martin Marion, has romped around the Sportsman's Park real estate in his customary astounding fashion and Junior Stephens hasn't had to yield a thing to his rival, who is undoubtedly the best since Hans Wagner.

In today's game both came through with absolutely incredible plays which had to be made to save runs. With Moore on first and none out in the fifth, Hayworth rapped a tremendous smash to Marion's right. It took just one high, skidding hop but the long-armed fielder glided over to snare it back-handed and make the force at second. A double play would have resulted if Verban's pivot-throw to first had not been low.

Stevie had the pressure on him in the fourth when, with men on second and third and two out, Lanier hit a slow grounder past the mound. The Browns' young short fielder raced in behind Potter scooped the trickling bounder and fired a slick underhand throw which flew perfectly into McQuinn's glove.

VERN SAVES MUNCRIE

Then, of course, there was Stephens' startling, back-to-the-diamond catch of Kurowski's fly in left field which started a double play and pulled Muncrief out of a tight spot. Plays of this type showed quite well why these two men are considered the most valuable players on their clubs, and why they are most likely to be chosen as most valuable in the two leagues.

The umpiring has been excellent. "That game (the opener) that Sears umpired yesterday was the best I can remember ever seeing," Luke Sewell said today. "They say that National League umpires are more inclined to call low pitches strikes than those in our league, but I didn't see any that I thought he called wrong all day."

There isn't much partisanship

among the customers. While the majority seems to be for the Browns on sentiment, the greater applause seems to go to the team which is the under-dog at any particular stage of the game. They were all yelling for a rally by the Browns when they were behind today and then the enthusiasm suddenly switched to the Cards when their rivals got the winning run to second with none out in the eighth. Maybe all tie games would be the solution.

Sergt. Charles Kiley, Jersey City, the first Stars and Stripes man in the invasion of France, has been sent here to cover the Series for the Army publication. Kiley, who has been overseas for two and a half years, will return to the Paris office of the Stars and Stripes about a week after the Series has ended.

The field is much better patrolled this year than last, when drunks and others, unable to find seats, sat in the dugout behind the players and second-guessed the managers from close range.

With a lefthander due to pitch for the Cards, the Browns naturally employed left-wingers in batting practice. Weldon West and outfielders Mike Chartak and Milt Byrnes did the throwing. The Browns use a cheap ball in practice and some of them have had progenitors which looked like rabbits. Chartak must have found a box full because every one in the lineup was knocking 'em out of the lot. Even Gutteridge, who had hit only one homer all year.

I don't want to cry on your shoulder, but I didn't think it would be like this... missing you so much. Maybe I do love you too much, do you suppose? What's it like with you? You sounded a little unconcerned on the phone. Teasing you. I hope you don't feel the same way I do. I'd better say goodnight before I go any further. I love you... they don't say half enough, those three words.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

October 6, 1944—New York

Darling,

I'm glad you called tonight instead of tomorrow. I needed to talk to you so much.

The little news item last night threw me, so to speak. I thought something had come up since you left. I was calling everyone names for this assignment, World Series or not, if you had to go right back.

The mail service from here must be better since you have all my letters and I have none. You'll probably get there before they do... I hope.

The Browns better win tomorrow and Sunday, for sure. You could be home Monday. That would be wonderful.

Bud [Hutton], Bob [Moora] and the two Iowa girls [no idea] were over at Jane and Benny's tonight. Bud is sighing, "I'll be glad to get back to Europe." Bud left and was to come back later. I think the Iowans were too much for him.

Jane and I are going to the Washington Market in the morning. She doesn't have to work either. I'm going to cook dinner for Marge.

We're all invited to Morrow Davis' wife's apartment for dinner Sunday a week.

It's swell Andy is slated to come home along with the other guys. His wife isn't supposed to know. I wonder how Earl Mazo will make out on that deal.

It's awfully late and I'm still wide awake. I tried sewing to put me to sleep but no good. Guess I need you.



Washington Market was founded in 1812 in lower Manhattan, and continued in roughly the same spot, near the site of the World Trade Center, until the 1960s. It sold fresh produce and meats. The site is now Washington Market Park.

Guess I'd better say goodnight. There's no sleeping in tomorrow. I have things to do before I meet Marge at 2:30.

I love you. There aren't enough words to tell how much. I miss you. Hurry home.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

October 8, 1944—St. Louis

Mornin' sweetheart,

I agree with you wholeheartedly that I ought to be horse-whipped. I don't know what has happened to some of the letters I wrote but two have bounced back because I addressed them to you at 309 East 42nd St., instead of 14th!

Of course, the Cardinals (your boys) just had to win yesterday to even the Series and drag it out a little more. I was hoping the Browns would win, thereby needing only one more game. However, it looks as if the Cards might win today and tomorrow so I can get out of here tomorrow night. there is a 6:00 p.m. train out which gets me in New York about 4:30 on Tuesday but I'll have to go like h—I to get it. I won't get out of the ball park until after 5 but I'll make it, don't worry.

Come to think of it... this probably will get to you after I get home but I'll take that chance.

I've had breakfast and am waiting to go to the 10 o'clock Mass at a church a few blocks from here. Got quite a lot of work done yesterday and last night but will have even more today.

I suppose there are lots of things to see in St. Louis but my travels have taken me to the ball park, Jefferson Hotel, sometimes a movie then back to the "Y." Don't have much time for anything else.

I didn't have any luck with Pullman reservations so I'm going to ride coach. the only reservation I could get was on the 9:12 a.m. Wednesday which wouldn't help me no matter how the Series came out. If the Cards win the next two, I'll leave Monday night. Even if the Series goes the limit of seven games (heaven forbid) Tuesday will be an off day and the last game will be played Wednesday which means I wouldn't leave until Wednesday night at 6:00.

I'm missing you 10,000 times more than is good for me. But, loving you that much more... which is good for me. Huh?

Time for church now. I'll be seein' you in a little bit...

'Bye, sweetheart. I love you... oh, so much.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, C.



A Pullman train car, with the seats being changed into upper and lower berths.

[This letter was written as Charles was getting ready to return to Europe. Ben Price went back at the same time; from November of 1944 until June of 1945, Billee and Jane Price shared an apartment, also on 14th Street in Manhattan.]

November 20, 1944

Hello sweetheart,

I know I wasn't able to say all that I wanted to say when we made our "bye for awhile" but I knew you felt what I had in my heart. Because of your unfailing love... and I've said this before... it was easier to go this time. At the same time I know it was harder for you.

I'll miss you more than ever, darling, but it will be comparatively easy to withstand, you mean that much to me. Moreover, we have so many more beautiful memories now, haven't we? I'll always have with me that memory of you coming to me in church, of holding hands during the wedding, how very beautiful you were and are.

How can I forget you as all and completely mine, in the Hawaiian Room again, at the ball game and the funny way you smoked a cigarette?

Yes, I could go on forever, sweetheart, but you know these things I have locked within me.

You are, and have been, the best sweetheart anyone ever had. It will always be thus.

So, please, don't feel too badly... please. We have so much happiness before us we can wait a little bit. Just go on loving me. And have as much fun as you can while I'm gone. Meanwhile, I'll save mine for my little baby.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

PS: I'd just love to have you send some cigarettes, assorted nuts and a chocolate bar or two. Maybe some maple sugar candy? Love, C.

Postmarked November 22, 1944—New York

Darling,

I just wrote two pages and they seemed so inadequate ... the scratching on both sheets. Do you suppose I've forgotten how to write you? I'm so used to having you around within arms' reach.

Something seemed to tell me this was the last time tonight. I wanted to call you back just once as you were getting on the bus but decided to leave well enough alone since I had myself under control... wish now I had.

Our goodbyes were said Monday morning. You knew that, too, I'm sure. I'm so grateful for last night... meant more for us than we realize right now. I'm glad you took the chance.

Will you want to hear how much I'm missing you? I could write reams on the subject now. It's awful, isn't it?

We talked for a bit tonight after getting home... no tears and had coffee (our coffeepot) then Jane made for the bed. She was so tired. I'm still wide awake, waiting for the phone to ring, really. Incidentally, Jane's side of the bed happened to be where I slept last night so I'll be sleeping on your side.

I'm writing in the little alcove with your robe on, hon, and it's going to be nice and warm, too. I'm glad you left it behind.

I called Andy but he was out. There was no reservation made for you. We could have had a room, though. They told Carl they weren't at all crowded. Wish we could have made it. Maybe tomorrow! Miracles can happen.

We're doing fine, darling. Missing you like mad already but I just can't help it.

I'll be back tomorrow. I love you so much, so very much.

Bless you and remember...

All my love and kisses, Always, your Billee

November 24, 1944—In the air

Evening, sweetheart,

My letters to you have been written in and from more than a few strange places. So this, written in a C54 at 8,000 feet or so, shouldn't be too unusual.

We took off exactly four hours and 31 minutes after I had spoken to you. Fortunately, we are making the 16-hour trip over the same route Bob did when he came back, in a "plush job." That is to say, we are in a "luxury" airliner complete with super-comfortable seats, etc. There are only 12 passengers, which makes the ship practically a private compartment.

Sitting across the aisle from me, and munching a sandwich, is Col. Phil [Flip] Cochran. You are more familiar with him as "Flip" Corkin in Terry and the Pirates [popular comic strip]. He can't be much older than I, perhaps a few years, but he has more silver in his hair than I'll have at 50... want to bet?

We have been in the air for two and half hours now, and I've read the letter you wrote last Sunday.

It... well, it was typical of you, darling. But, honestly, I didn't suspect you were writing to me when I walked in the room. I remember thinking you were writing to Mom.



Phil Cochran and his comic strip alter ego. "Terry and the Pirates" was one of the most popular comic strips in the Stars and Stripes.

It's nice and cozy here. We have comforters to cover our legs if necessary and to cover us when we sleep. Just now, I'm peeled down to my shirt and sweater.

Benny and I had the thermos bottles filled before we left but as long as we can get coffee from the steward, I won't open it.

Our first lunch... you just ask for it whenever you're hungry... was three tasty and fresh sandwiches, paper cup of diced pineapple, two cupcakes, chocolate bar, gum, orange, and coffee.

We will be able to get another "snack" at our first stop.

Honestly, sweetheart, it's a good thing we didn't hang around much longer or I would have split wide open at the seams. Even just before we got aboard, I was in a coffee shop on the field eating a sandwich, cake and milkshake!

These are the trips I wish we could make together. And there's so much room here, too. In fact, there are 17 empty seats! Surely you, and Jane, too, wouldn't take up much room. Perhaps we'll pick up more passengers on our first stop but I doubt it.

I'm so happy you felt what I tried to tell you, Billee. When I left two and half years ago in the bottom of a transport, my spirit meter registered minus. Today, as always, I yearned for you but in a different way. But, knowing you are mine and that we'll always be one now has made a world of difference.

Of course, the fact that I'm going over this time in as much comfort as anybody, king or commoner, ever crossed the ocean, has a little to do with my high morale.

Uncle Samuel sure does move his men around with fuss and fashion, hon.

I'm going to leave you for awhile, way up in the clouds for sure this time, but I'll be back before the trip is over.

—

We have made two stops since I've been with you. Now, it is a beautiful day, following up a star-lit night.

—

Sunset again, sweetheart. First time I've been able to see the sun go down and the moon come up, at the same time. Pretty soon, we'll be back in the E.T.O., so I'll kiss you goodnight until we are in London tomorrow.

—

London once more, and it hasn't changed a bit. There are a few new faces in the office but still some of the old ones.

And, of course, Gertie and Alf are still going strong. We spent about five hours in the Lamb and Lark today passing out the gifts we brought and having a "few" for "auld lang synes."

I'm staying at Clifford's Inn... same apartment, now occupied by two of our fellows, for a few days, perhaps as long as a week.

Please send some cigarettes, a subscription to Time, gum, thin leads for my Eversharp, and all your love.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

November 24, 1944—New York

My darling,

I waited 'til now to read your letter. I wanted it before I went to sleep since I knew I'd probably need to more then.

Tonight you're soaring somewhere close to the stars... so far and so near to me. I know, darling, that I'm going to be all right. I think yesterday saved me... being with you somehow made me stronger inside and I'm all right even tonight. There's an awful knot in my throat, but it'll go away. I made up my mind I was going to be the way you wanted me to be.

It's good Jane and I are together. We're keeping each other's chin up.

Even after I hung up today it was hard to grasp the idea that you were actually going... that yesterday was goodbye... this being on the verge of going the last few days was making me wonder if you ever were going. As much as I wanted to hang on to every minute, I knew how unpleasant it was and the strain we were both under wasn't good. This way you will be home that much sooner.

Your letter is perfect as always and just what I needed. We belong together, darling. I'm not all here without you... feel lost a bit... but that's because part of me went along with you.

I thought maybe I might feel like "Billee Gray" again, not having you here, but I'm just Mrs. Kiley whose husband is away. Please hurry home. There'll be no fun except with you. We might try finding some. According to Jane, we're going gallivanting... broadcasts, plays, symphonies, ballets, etc. All of it isn't going to take away that loneliness for you. Besides, I wouldn't want it to... fine thing if I didn't miss you.

I'm doing that already. I miss all the little things... the way you read the paper, puttering around the kitchen making coffee, teasing me. The way you look after you've showered and shaved... that little-boy look you have in your pajamas. So many things I miss so soon. Most of all, you, darling.

I'll never forget yesterday as long as I live... not just our being together but everything. That was meant to be somehow... yesterday, I mean. I love you so much, so very much. I'm so glad we're us, if that makes sense.

Take good care of yourself. I'm hoping you won't get bored doing the desk work over there and start heading for a little action. Please, hon, you've had enough.

We're keeping late hours tonight, Jane and I, but neither of us is sleepy. It's after one a.m. We'll have to do better than that so we'll stay beautiful for our guys.

I couldn't stop loving you for a second. Kiss me goodnight. I miss being tucked in. I love you.

All my love and kisses, Always, your Billee

November 25, 1944—New York

My darling,

Your goodbye (the last one) arrived today. I love your thoughtfulness, as always, trying to make it as easy as possible for me.

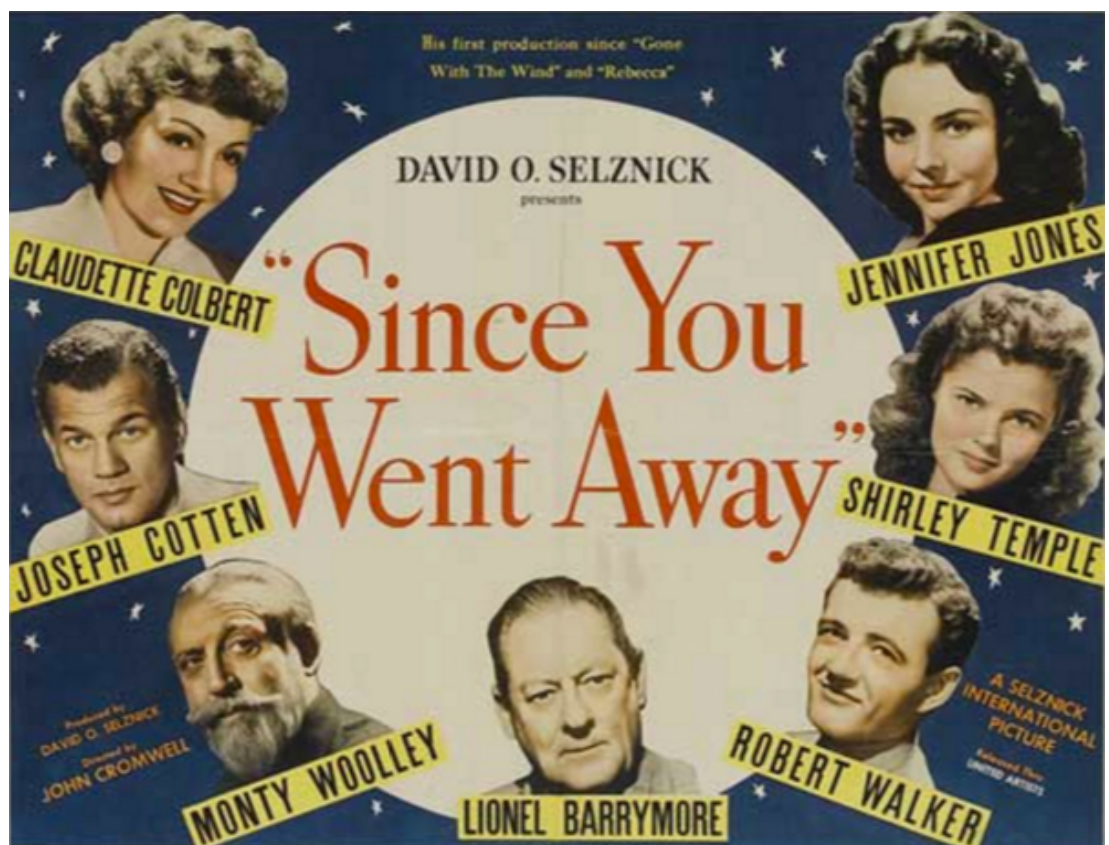
I hope it won't be too long before we'll be hearing from you both.

It seems an age since we were together already but that must be because we only saw you in snatches this week and we've been alone in the apartment.

We made a mistake tonight going to see "Since You Went Away." We both almost had to leave before it was over but decided to stick it out.

Last night we got out and battled the crowds in Macy's... did a little Xmas shopping for you. I have things for your box or shall I say, boxes. I'll get one off Monday, anyway.

I called Father John last night and 195 and told them of your leaving. Pop is feeling better. When I talked to Bette, he had gone to confession.



It's such a beautiful night, all stars and moon, and oh, I miss you so much. Seemed strange and lonely going to the movie without you both.

Forgive the pencil, but you took the ink, I suddenly realized tonight.

I bought more Xmas cards tonight so I'll get right at those, so it will be over. I washed my hair again tonight and did my nails. I'm in the alcove, looking so glamorous with my hair pinned up and my scarf, your robe... just to give you an idea of how tonight finds me.

I was able to get your Time subscription without a request. Jane wanted to give Benny Life [magazine] so I suggested that I give it to him for our Xmas present.

We're reading the Sunday papers and the Tribune Book Review has a half page ad devoted to "Air Gunner [by Andy Rooney and Bud Hutton]." Swell layout, too.

It's awfully late but neither of us is sleepy so you won't mind my rattling on a bit longer.

I was surprised to hear about Landis [Kenesaw Mountain Landis, first Commissioner of Baseball] dying. I remembered he was ill during the Series but I don't remember hearing any more about him. He always made me think of baseball and vice versa, but he was getting well along in years.

Good news too about Col. Z____ (?) turning up as a POW.

I see where my old friend, Asheville's colorful Major Morgan [Robert Knight Morgan] piloted O'Donnell's [Gen. Emmet "Rosie" O'Donnell, first bomber raid on Tokyo] ship in the recent raid on Tokyo. I wondered what they had done with him.

I sound like a news commentator. Do you mind?

I miss your discussing the day... all the little things, as usual, but I have to tell you.

We are doing swell... you'd be awfully proud of us, really, the way our chins are staying up. As I said before, it's good we are together.

Tuesday we are meeting Meg Hanson for dinner and Hildegard [cabaret singer], and we are going to call Libby Davis to get rid of the dagger and bullets [from Morrow Davis, Stars and Stripes staff]. We'll do something with her, too.

I know, darling, you will hurry home as soon as possible. That thought is staying with me.

I'm still missing being tucked in and most of all falling asleep with you holding my hand. Funny how simple things stick in your mind.

I'd better say goodnight while I still can. I love you so with all of me. Take care of yourself and remember, "you are my baby."

All my love and kisses, Always your Billee

November 26, 1944—New York

Hello, darling,

It's getting to be a habit, these "goodnight dates." If I have to write... meaning, of course, since you went away... I'd rather do it at this hour.

We received the welcome message from Carl [who had taken over running the New York Bureau] of your safe arrival in London. Now I'm concerned about getting you to Paris... the sooner the better, what with those buzz bombs. Worrying again, as usual, but just can't help it.

The first time I've been in the office without you was today. Missed you terribly. Do you mind? I took your glasses up so Carl could stick them in the envelope going over.

I wrote a little note and stuck it in the bottom of the glass case. Just happened to think it might be all right. I also invited Carl for spaghetti Thursday night. He has been hesitant about coming up; said he didn't like the idea of eating up our groceries, and wanted to know if he could bring something. What a guy.

Jane and I went to the Notley's [possibly friends of Ben and Jane] this afternoon and had supper with them, really good, too. Cold turkey and Thanksgiving leftovers.

I called Dot tonight and told her you had arrived safely... also 195. Al is up and around, slow but coming around all right. They removed the stitches yesterday. [Not sure why Al had stitches.]

I'll get tickets to a show and ask her to come over. She's been confined quite a bit lately. Maybe she'd enjoy stepping out with a couple of war widows.

Tom [O'Connor, married to Eleanor, Charles' sister] had a three-day pass. They stopped by tonight while we were at the Notley's. They went to Long Island Friday for the weekend and didn't get the message that you had left and arrived.

We were busy today. After staying up 'til nearly two a.m., we slept 'til after ten and that threw us off our schedule a bit. We cleaned the apartment good after we came from Mass and cooked dinner. It's not much fun just cooking for us. We need you and Benny to make it worthwhile... just need you.

I'm going to 195 tomorrow. Benny's father is coming over for dinner and to stay with Jane while I'm gone.

Tuesday we go to dinner and the [radio] broadcast with Pete Hansen's [another Stars and Stripes staffer] wife. Wednesday we have open. Think you might work in a few hours? We'd love having you... especially me.

I picked up the enclosed mail at the office. Opened it to see if anything was urgent for the paper... only one from one of your "Once Over Lightly" fans complaining about the medical discharges baseball players are getting. Carl kept that for Andy. [While he was in New York, Charles had started a sports roundup column for the paper in London called "Once Over Lightly." Andy Rooney took over the column while he was assigned to the New York Bureau.]

Andy was able to get tickets for the Army-Navy game. They rented an apartment on East 23rd near Third Avenue... furnished but they are importing a lot of necessities from Albany to make it more livable, according to Carl.

Also, I'm enclosing Dan Parker [sports columnist for NY Daily Mirror] and Bob Considine [syndicated columnist for International News Service during WWII] since I thought you might be especially interested in the background stuff in Parker's column and Considine's coverage of Landis' death.

Jane and I automatically stop at the newsstand and buy all the papers... force of habit, I guess.

Charlie Notley spent some time in Paris and is quite enthused about it. She thought it was wonderful... could think of nothing nicer than going to Paris.

We're checking on the French lessons. I think it will be the Berlitz School. They seem to be very good. I'm going to be prepared for anything that might come up. I'm too young... all these jobs seem to call for girls 24 and over. [Jane and Billee planned to learn French and to try for jobs in France.]

I'm anxious to hear about your trip over... the meeting with Alf and Gertie and all the old friends. I can just picture you all gathered around in the Lamb and Lark... Miss me just a little bit.

I can't even talk about missing you, and this is only three or rather two days since we were together.

I'd better say goodnight. Oh, darling, I love you so and miss you terribly. Here's my goodnight kiss. Love me lots.

All my love and kisses, Always your Billee

November 27, 1944—New York

Darling,

It's a Monday night exactly as last week, except the sound of the rain isn't as comforting or as cozy as last week when the four of us were spending a little of our borrowed time.

About this time of the evening, you had your head in my lap and I was brushing your hair. It was a lovely night... I'm hanging onto every minute.

It isn't wrong to take our memories out and enjoy them again. We have such beautiful ones now and so many, but I'd like better to be making more.

Benny's Dad came over for dinner and we had waffles. Nice to have a man around to cook for but not like having you.

Ray Roche called me tonight. I tried calling back but was too late to catch him. He's giving us tickets to the Ice Show for Thursday night. We had invited Carl over for spaghetti but we'll ask him to go, too.

I was going to 195 tonight but the weather is so awful. Didn't feel like getting wet again.

Your package, at least one of them, is all ready for the post office. Hope it gets there in time for Xmas. I'll get another off this week as soon as you send me another letter of request.

I'm hoping it won't be too long 'til we get mail from you.

Tomorrow night is the night we step out with Meg Hanson. Going to a dinner at a place called "Three Corners."

Your Dad is a little better but this weather isn't so good for him. You have a letter from Johnnie Joyce at 195. I'm going to open it if you don't mind. Looking forward to hearing what he has to say. El said there was an A.P.O. on the return.

I'm enclosing Pegler's column. Thought you might like to read the way he covers this ammunition smell. [Westbrook Pegler was a conservative columnist who distrusted Roosevelt and the New Deal. He continually criticized both Roosevelts in his columns, frequently referring to "bad smells" with reference to them.] Treads on a few people's toes again.

I'm going to be able to get film [for his movie camera] for Father John so I'll send it right to him so he can use it for the play... or the show, I guess it is.

I think Margaret [Ben and Jane's pet turtle] misses Benny. She's been so quiet since he left. Dunbar [another pet turtle] is really getting to be quite an acrobat. We've caught him practically out on the table any number of times.

I'll be glad to hear you're in Paris. Worried a little about this London deal.

We have the French book tonight. We can take 45 hours at Berlitz School for \$90. Seems pretty steep to me. You pay a third down in the beginning.

I think the best thing to do is try and get into one of the government agencies. They are sending only those at the present time with technical backgrounds but as soon as the armistice is signed there will be more sent. OWI [US Office of War Information], UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration] and OSI [have not been able to trace the meaning of this acronym] we know definitely are sending workers over.

I'm brushing up on my shorthand and typing to see what happens.

Seems like tonight has been busy. It's late again tonight but it's just as well. This is better than trying to go to sleep. Wish I could relax the way you do. Maybe I'll learn some day.

I'm trying to really get enthused and interested about something but you see, I've found my little niche where I know I can do the best job and that's being Mrs. Kiley, of course. The other things seem unimportant.

I'm missing you. Seems a heck of a long time since last Monday. I'd love being tucked in tonight. Goodnight, my darling. I love you so.

All my love and kisses, Always your sweetheart

November 28, 1944—London

Hello sweetheart

Here in the same room where I made love to you so many times before, I come to you again with the same message of devotion.

Yes, it is apartment #64 in Clifford's Inn. Ben and I are staying here while in London. Two others have it now, one of whom is away on a trip. Of course, there always was room for three so we aren't overcrowded.

I didn't do much today except spend a little time at both the business and editorial offices, trying to find out when we will leave for Paris. I gave Mr. Frost the candy for his younger daughter (aged 14, if you must know) and the stockings for Mrs. Frost.

Tomorrow, I'm going out to Beckenham and spend the afternoon with the Frosts. It is his day off and he is anxious to show me the bomb damage out there.

Lorna, his younger daughter, was evacuated to Scotland a couple of months ago when the buzz bombs were pretty active but is coming home for Christmas. She'll get the candy then.

I've been missing you terribly, as I knew I would. Last night I was tired but couldn't sleep for more than an hour just thinking of you. I wasn't thinking of anything in particular but, like the way a song keeps going through your head, I relived so many things that took place during the last few months.

And the more I think of them, the more I realize how strong our love is.

While I think of it, I'll have to remember to send you a copy of Andy's first column in which he said, "I left New York with the tears of his lonely bride still wet on his leather jacket."

And, speaking of Andy reminds me to ask to you get my "Air Gunner" from the Dalys at the first opportunity.

The wedding announcements reached the civilians over here last week and those who I showed your picture to agreed they didn't know "how I rated" such a sweetheart.

"Bye for now, darling. Miss me a little?"

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

November 29, 1944—New York

My darling

It's very late but, refreshed with a shower, I'm good for another half hour and that will bring the clock around to one a.m.

Let's begin with yesterday because you see I didn't talk to you last night.

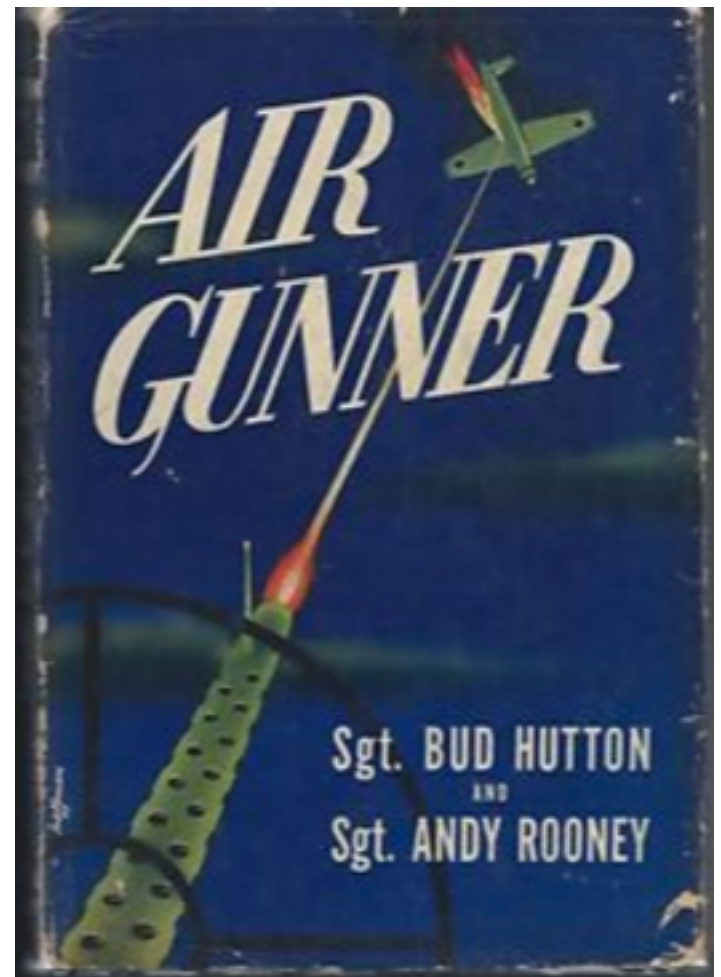
We met Meg at the Three Corners and instead of having dinner we played with two Manhattans around and visited the smorgasbord and had Swedish pancakes for desert... pretty good, too, but I've had it as far as Swedish food is concerned for awhile.

Meg is an interesting girl. I enjoyed the evening. She's trying her best to get over, too, some way or another. She says it's easy to get to London but the difficulty is getting across to the Continent. Fortunately, she has her college and three years of French behind her. She has some of the most amazing ideas. We're going to get together again and go to a show. She's going to get tickets for us... seems like the Hansons know people.

The broadcast was fun. I'm sorry we all didn't get to go. You would have enjoyed Hildegard. John Garfield was a guest and Irving Berlin. It was all very informal, almost like a party. One of the nice points was a package of Raleighs given to you as you came in.

We got home about twelve and by the time we prepared for a little sleep, it was late and, of course, we had to discuss the evening.

A catastrophe has occurred... the mystery of the year. We came home, or rather I did about six last night and found Jane on her hands and knees searching all over for Dunbar. He escaped from his



little bowl and skedaddled somewhere. As yet, his whereabouts are still not known. I expect any minute to step on him or see him crawling out from somewhere.

We're having horrible weather. Rain since Monday. I'm getting a bit tired of it. Got a beautiful soaking going to 195 tonight.

Your Dad finished "Air Gunner" and enjoyed it. Didn't care too much for the coarse language but said that must be the way they are. Uncle John is reading it, too. He is feeling some better. Dr. Doyle saw him last night and told him not to be in a hurry to return to his job. The inactivity isn't so good for him, either. He needs to keep busy. Eddie's Purple Heart arrived, though the poor guy still hasn't received any mail. Pop is counting a lot on your seeing him. Hope you can. If so, he'll want a full report.

Received a long letter from Warren but no mention of being grounded. He just finished reading "Air Gunner" and it made him homesick, says he, but he still doesn't want any part of it. His pilot is back in England as well as the navigator and someone else he mentioned... co-pilot, I think.

Walter Keely is home. El says he was at Croft and in Ireland with you.

We have a letter from Johnny Joyce that I'm enclosing. He's in India, off all places. You didn't mind my opening it.

You should see me sprawled in the dressing room. Jane is asleep by now. I'm in here about to melt because I have the door closed. I have your wedding pajamas on... almost a perfect fit. They're kind of cute. The blouse fits me about at the knees but they are comfortable.

My last letter I forgot to number, so that should be #5.

I missed you so going over on the bus tonight and coming back. No one to hold hands with. We missed you both last night starting out to meet Meg. All dressed up and it seemed as if you both had to be there.

It seems like ten thousand years since Friday. I've read your two letters over and over. You were wonderful to think of them, but then you're always like that.

I love you so. I'm remembering our quiet moments together at 195 with your head in my lap... again at 309... the night I came home and you were asleep. I was so frightened at first 'til I could see you were all right.

Oh, darling, love me and miss me, too. I'm doing fine so far... missing you terribly but trying to keep busy.

Goodnight, my darling. Pleasant dreams. I love you so.

All my love and kisses, Always your Billee

November 29, 1944—London

Hello sweetheart,

This will be my last night in London if the flying weather remains clear. I booked passage to Paris this morning and am due to leave tomorrow afternoon. Benny was booked for a plane leaving tomorrow morning so we won't be going over together this time. I'll be right behind him, however, since it only takes an hour and a half from here to Paris. Bob decided to stay here a while and spend a little more time with his social life.

I did a story on my reactions to the "home front" yesterday; then, went to Beckenham [Kent] to spend the rest of the day with the Frosts.

Mr. Frost showed me around to see the awful destruction caused by the V-1 bombs. Honestly, hon, it was terrible. They haven't had any V-2s fall there yet and it's a good thing. [Beckenham was hit with V-2 rockets in January of 1945. The county of Kent, not far from London, received nearly 1500 V-1 and V-2 rockets attacks between 1944 and 1945.]

Mrs. Frost worked at an emergency rest center for bombed-out families during the five months of the bombings and for a period of ten weeks didn't see Mr. Frost at all. She was working all night while he worked all day. They were fortunate in only having the ceilings in two rooms fall, a few holes in the roof and windows smashed by blast. As it is now, they sleep in a shelter during the night.

Mrs. Frost was thrilled with the stockings. She said they were the best she has seen in five years.

If you think of it, sweetheart, why don't you drop her a line occasionally. She is the kind who greatly appreciates something like that. You would think I gave her a million dollars when I gave her the stockings and candy. The announcements we sent took two months to get here. If you haven't sent the Christmas cards yet, send them to "Sgt. James Frost, Composing Room, c/o Stars and Stripes, A.P.O. 413, N.Y. City." It will get to him by air faster that way. You might put "The Times" after "Composing Room."

I stayed in Beckenham until 11 o'clock; then, went straight home to have a look at my angel's picture before going to bed.



V-2 rocket ("V" for vengeance) were fired on civilian targets in England in retaliation for the bombing of cities in Germany.

I've covered three pages so far without telling you that I love you, oh, so very much, sweetheart.

I've been terribly lonely these last few days and nights but it is the kind of loneliness I want to feel. I want to feel it every minute I'm away from you. And, I don't intend to do anything about it until you can come into my arms forever. There was a time, before, when the "miss you" feeling got so bad I'd try to lose it by going to a movie or mixing with a lot of people somewhere. Maybe it's bad, but I just want to miss you and be lonely all by myself. I said once my love for you was an obsession. I'm sure it's more than that now, Billee dearest. Because an hour doesn't go by without my mind going back to you.

I'm sure I am overdoing my display of pride, too. The snapshots I have of the wedding are coming out of my wallet every 15 minutes or so. They have been shown to at least 50 people!

So, with another thought of you, I'll say "goodnight" and leave you until I reach Paris.

Love me and miss me, ever so much. Be near me.

All my love and kisses, forever and always,
Charles

PS: I started to number the letters with this one.
Please send cigarettes and gum. C.



Charles and Billee's wedding, Jersey City, August 1944.

November 30, 1944—New York

My darling,

It's worse than last night, and I'm not at all sleepy. When I think how I begged for a little sleep when you were home... now I have the opportunity and what do I do but sit up with you anyway.

We went to the Ice Show at the Garden and we thoroughly enjoyed it. Ringside seats to begin with and the most wonderful show I ever saw. I wish you could have been there... and Bob Moora. One of the stars did the usual drunk slapstick and it was terrific. I thought of Bob immediately and the Saturday he almost went skating with Libby Davis.

Carl came over for dinner... spaghetti, and we made chocolate pie. Scorched the darn chocolate and didn't know 'til it was served so we ended up with doughnuts and coffee. He went to the show, too. Didn't sit with us but had a good seat.

It's so cold out... swell for snuggling up. The moon is nearly full and the stars so bright.

You know something... I want to come to Paris in the very worst way and at the first whisper of an opportunity, I'm going to jump.

Carl was telling us more about it tonight... how wonderful he could see it would be in the spring.

Andy and Marg [Andy Rooney's wife] are pretty disgusted with their apartment. I think they are going to move.

You should be in Paris tonight according to Benny's cable. I don't want you in London any longer than is necessary. There I go again, but I'll feel lots better with you in Paris.

Carl seemed to think you'd go out in the field again. I didn't say yes or no... told him I didn't know what you'd decide. I hope you'll stay in Paris at least through the winter, anyway. You probably won't get as restless out in the field as you might be confined, but we'll see.

The drive seems to be going great on both sides. Maybe the major was right... we'll have to wait and see.

I'm missing you again as usual. I dreamed about you all night... must be from wearing your pajamas. It was awfully messed up, but I know you were there.

I had the funniest feeling going to the Garden, as if we should be meeting you there.

I can hardly write about missing you... I'd better steer away from that.

Don't be worrying about me. I'm keeping awfully busy and that helps a little. Just hurry home. I love you so. At the rate I'm going I'll have about 5 hours' sleep since tomorrow is First Friday. I hope I hear from you very soon. I love you... goodnight for a little while.

All my love and kisses, Always your sweetheart

December 1, 1944—New York

My dearest,

I'm here again. It's late but I don't mind. You're asleep now I hope. I loved watching you sleep. Somehow, you always managed to look about twelve with your hair tousled and the easy way you sleep.

Carl told me today that you had arrived in Paris, also that you were spending a few days seeing Paris. I'm glad but Jane's pretty much peeved that Benny was in such a mad rush to get back to work and now he's taking time off again. I did my best to smooth it over. I'm anxious to hear your impression of Paris. I hope we get mail soon.

One of the men that happened to be in the newsroom when Jane received word of Ben's arrival in Paris is interested and is checking with OWI to see if there is a chance for us. We start the French lessons next week.

Jane had dinner with Janet Bucknell tonight, so I came home and ate alone. Missed you horribly. I miss you when Jane is here, of course, but alone, it's such a lost feeling. Would you rather I didn't tell

you how I feel? I can't very well anyway because it's all inside me the way I feel and I can't put it on paper.

The Notleys are coming for supper tomorrow night. Carl may drop around if he can't find a date.

As far as I know, we are to have dinner with Col. Llewellyn Sunday [worked with Charles in London] and we are to go to a concert at Town Hall in the afternoon with Newell Rogers and his wife. Quite the social butterflies we've turned into. Do you mind?

I cleaned the apartment good and while scrubbing the kitchen, who do you think I found? Dunbar, practically gone, too, after all this time. I was beginning to wonder how one would give artificial respiration to a turtle named Dunbar. He revived quickly in the water, however, and at this point is trying to get out again.

Andy is in Baltimore. Got tickets for the Army-Navy game. Super swell... darn, I won't even get to listen to it.

I went to the little Spanish church this morning for First Friday services. He said the prayers at the end in Spanish. Went to confession there, too. They have those who hear confessions in English on one side and Spanish on the other.

Received a letter from Warren but he doesn't mention being grounded. Lettie [Billee's oldest sister] said in her letter that he might be sent to Columbus, Ohio. That would be a deal. He read "Air Gunner." His reaction...

"homesickness." Lt. Harvey is back in the E.T.O. flying a couple of times a month but he says he wants no part of it.

I love you so... miss you even more. I hope it's soon that I get a letter. I've practically worn the others out. Goodnight, my darling.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your sweetheart

December 2, 1944—Paris

Billee dearest,

Please forgive me, pretty please, for violating one of our rules and coming to talk with you this way. But, I'm afraid we will have to put up with the typewriter more than ever now because the office



Our Lady of Guadalupe Church at 229 West 14th Street, founded in 1902. The parish was merged with another Spanish-speaking parish further west on 14th Street and the church was converted to other uses around 2010.

seems to be the only place around here that's warm enough to make you feel like writing. Now, don't get me wrong... because you will come to realize that even with my reserved character I didn't dream I could ever love or miss anyone or anything as I'm loving and missing you now.

While Benny is dipping cheese tidbits into a jar of his peanut butter and passing them along to me I'll try to give you a picture of the setup here.



The Paris Herald building, on Place de l'Opera, as it looks today.

As you know, the office occupies four floors of the Paris Herald building. The editorial room is on the second floor. There are a lot of new faces, quite a few of the old and a good spirit among everybody. It's going to be a good gang to work with. Col. Llewellyn is back in the states and a Maj. Goodfriend with whom I was friendly is the big boss. Bud is running the Paris desk at present.

We are billeted in a fourth-rate hotel, two men to a room with hot water about

three days a week. Still, it's better than most others have here and nobody is kicking.

Now, about my prospects.

I'll be in Paris for about two weeks as things look now. Then, a team of about 12 will go to either Liege (Belgium) or Luxembourg to open another edition. Eventually, this edition will be the one servicing frontline troops while Paris will service troops in and around Paris and possibly one of the armies. Bud will be one of those to go with us. Bob [Moora} and Benny will remain in Paris and work on the desk here. My job will be running the sports page and whatever else is necessary. That's the job I wanted for awhile, until I get the feeling of things again... and that's what I got.

Earl and I had quite a long talk last night. He was just back from the front and anxious to get news of home. Joe Fleming, whose picture is enclosed for our scrapbook and who will be in the next group to go home, was with us, and wouldn't forgive me for not calling Margaret [no idea who this is].

Incidentally, we have our meals in a restaurant near the office. It is staffed by French help, supervised by an Army mess sergeant, with GI food served. I like it this way.

For entertainment, there are two GI movies, a couple of good French shows like the Folies Bergere, which I'll probably never see. There are plenty of spots for a beer or two now and then. Beer is about 25 cents a glass, cognac is 80 cents and champagne is 12 dollars a bottle. My limit has been and will be beer, believe me. By the way, I got \$80 for the stuff I brought with me and in a couple of days, I'm sending you a money order. That will take a little longer than the cable I used to send, but there isn't any cabled money service here.

Reading this back again, I find it doesn't half reflect what I have in my heart for you. But, I did want to give you as much of a picture of things as I can at this time.

I haven't had an opportunity to see any of the sights like the Notre Dame cathedral, Les Invalides where Napoleon is buried, Montmartre or any of the other places, but there will be time.

Until my records get over here from London, I can't do anything about the change of address on the bonds or the change in my insurance beneficiary, but I'll take care of those as soon as I can.

The government finally caught up with me on the allotment, so that I only received about \$9 for my November salary but at least we know that's out of the way.

There was a letter from Lettie today. She beat everybody (including you, aren't you ashamed) by being responsible for my first letter here. She said Bill wants me to hurry home because he doesn't like "Aunt Billee to be all alone."

I'll be back in a little while with a better love letter than this.

Got a great big smile for me? And the biggest kiss ever? Ah, that's what I like. Be a good girl, now.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

PS: Please send me cigarettes, gum and whatever you can think of. I think a package every couple of weeks will be ok, hon, and when this cigarette business gets cleared up, we can cut down even more.

December 2, 1944—New York

My darling,

We had practically a Price "orgy." The Notleys were over for waffles and, of course, beer later. Carl couldn't find anything better to do so he came in about ten. Had a couple of beers and got practically pie-eyed. I missed you terribly having them here. Seemed you should have been somewhere and Benny dashing around with refills.

Guess what? We are to have dinner with Col. Llewellyn. I'm anxious to meet the guy. Carl says he speaks Japanese. What a deal that is.

Jane just said "It's two a.m.," with great disgust. We're all ready to hop in, but I had to have these few minutes with you.

It's awfully cold out. How are you finding Paris? Cold, too, or maybe not too bad?

I bought Xmas cards for El today and remembered we wouldn't be together for our anniversary. Four months already... doesn't seem possible but I feel very much like Mrs. Kiley.

I finally have the dresses from the dressmakers now that you are gone. I'll wear the black jersey to dinner tomorrow because I know you will want me to look my best. The dress looks very nice, so Jane says.

Oh, I love you so. That miss you feeling keeps coming up. Do you mind? I have one of those pessimistic moods tonight. Guess I just need you around. Love me and please take good care of yourself.

Goodnight, my darling.

All my love and kisses, always your sweetheart

December 3, 1944—New York

Darling,

Another weekend scratched off the list. We don't like Saturdays and Sundays. We seem to miss you more.

This was quite a Sunday. Lunching with a Lt. Colonel, and what an old goat. He tried to be at his best, what with four women in tow. He played the part of "one of the boys" and "slap you on the back" attitude. A lot of big talk that we simply let go in one ear and out the other.

He rattled on about getting promotions for you all and how the office is going to be enlarged... even proposed that one of us take over the secretarial position open but we returned the idea as not practical. He thought it a wonderful idea. I can't think of anything worse than working for him... what a tactless so and so he is.

He just couldn't see how you and Benny could leave us here and return to Paris... just an example of the conversation.

One thing he said about you... you were the only guy he knew that could sleep in a foxhole all night and get up in the morning with your pants pressed.

Also, he talked about the Pacific edition... four editions he mentioned (this I didn't like) and he spoke a little Japanese for us. He should have stayed in Tokyo.

On the whole, I can easily understand you not liking him. When I think of him I can appreciate Pegler's column all the more.

Meg, Jane and I all adjourned to Libby's apartment for the afternoon. I missed you terribly there... we had fun there that Sunday.

We took some pictures inside with the camera (German) that Morrow sent her. Also, she brought out his souvenirs... opera glasses and a German paratrooper's knife. What a wicked-looking instrument that is.

It was colder than the very devil today but the apartment is nice and warm. I practiced on the typewriter tonight on a letter to Warren. I think I told you how awful it was the other night after using that machine at the office. I addressed a few Xmas cards, wrote a couple of checks and letters to go with them, and now I'm with you. Jane is asleep already but I seem to be the nighthawk.

I wore one of my new dresses today, the black. Jane thinks it's very smart. It's nice and warm anyway... kind of plain, but I think you would like it.

I hope I have a letter tomorrow. It's going to make you feel even further away. Somehow not having a letter makes it seem as if you might walk in any time... silly thought, probably. In spite of all the activity, I miss having you near in so many ways. I even miss seeing you touch your toes and the funny antics you went through... your shadow boxing and shoving me around. I wish we could have had a real tussle but that darn rug at 309 [West 14th Street] just kept me off the floor. Just wait 'til we have our own... you'd better get in good condition.

Building the fire at Libby's made me miss you a bit more... you liked it so much. We have so many memories that I can't keep them from tumbling out. Those first days... in Asheville and Massillon [when Billee and Charles went to Asheville, NC to visit Billee's mother, and to Massillon, Ohio, to visit Billee's Aunt Katherine]. They were all such happy times. We have only the best. You know, I'm very proud inside being Mrs. Kiley, and I really feel like Mrs. Kiley even though you aren't with me. Is that good? I'll say goodnight, darling. It is awfully late, as usual, but I like being with you now... alone.

All my love and kisses, always your sweetheart

December 4, 1944—Paris

Billee dearest,

I just knew it wouldn't be too long getting here... that first "bit of heaven" all over again. Your letter No. 3 (haven't received No. 2 yet) came today and did wonderful things for me, sweetheart. You talked of seeing "Since You Went Away," washing your hair and sitting in the alcove with pins in your hair and my robe on.

Darling, honestly, I'll never tease you about those pins again and I'll wash your hair every night and day of the week if you want me to because I'm missing those things so awfully much. When I had the opportunity, I remember letting you wash your hair and now that I'd give anything to be able to do it, I can't.



*Billee, Jane Price and Libby Morroze,
December 1944*

But, like you, I have kept my chin up and will continue to do so. Still, it will never stop me from missing you and loving you more than ever. It helps so much to lie in bed and think of you. Last night when I had said my prayers and put my head on the pillow my first thought of you brought me back to Asheville and the day you cried in the living room, frightening me and not telling me what brought your tears. There wasn't any reason why I should think of that before anything else, but I did. It's natural that we dwell on those we have nearest our hearts when we go to bed, isn't it? Just now, I suppose I should be thinking about what I have to do tomorrow, or what I did today or what I'll be doing when I leave Paris. But I can easily put those out of my mind and think of you. Besides, it's so much better. There is still no definite word of when we will leave here or whether the new edition will be in Liege or Luxembourg. It should be known in a few days, however. Meanwhile, I'm getting together an awful lot of things to take with me in the way of office material. I've also cabled Larsen for several items.

I had my first experience with the French language this morning when I set out for church. The manageress of the hotel gave me directions to "l'eglise" first. After walking about half a mile, I asked a man to direct me to "la Catholique eglise." On I went for a mile and after one more query found myself in St. Augustin Cathedral, about two and half miles from the hotel. I found my way back all right after Mass and learned the church I should have gone to was only two blocks away.

I spent this afternoon and early evening at the office then took in a French movie, which was fairly interesting, following the continuity without understanding the dialogue. I finished the night off with a snack and coffee in the restaurant where we have our mess. You see, because the fellows work until 10:30 or 11:00 at the office and sleep too late in the morning to have breakfast, we have our three

meals at noon, 5:30 and 10:30. That doesn't prevent anyone from having breakfast, however, although only a few get up for it. The small but very neat and clean restaurant (seating about 70 or 80) is used solely for *Stars and Stripes* and a couple of other small organizations and becomes a sort of "club" for us at night. We usually sit and talk over our coffee until 12:00, then retire or sit up in one of the fellows' rooms.

You mentioned Jane and you having dinner with Meg Hanson which reminded me that Pete, who is back in the circulation department and working out of Liege, is coming down here tomorrow and I'll be able to deliver my last package.



Now a luxury hotel, the Scribe during the war was a second or third-class Paris hotel which housed nearly all the international press correspondents and photographers. Any correspondent's memoir of the time mentions the Scribe.

I haven't seen Jimmy McG____[?] yet but sent the cigarettes over to him. He's working at Press Headquarters in the Hotel Scribe on the other side of the city.

With that, I'll take your hand, kiss you goodnight (yes, three times) and say, "Goodnight, sweetheart."
Happy Anniversary.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

December 4, 1944—New York

My darling,

Believe it or not, your letter written en route and in London was waiting for me. Jane was as excited as I was and a bit disappointed that Ben didn't have one here for her at the same time. That's to be expected, however. I know I'd feel the same way.

How about this... the Colonel had Carl call Jane to see if I wouldn't take the job. He thought I should have it. The more I think about it the less I want it. Under different circumstances, I'd love the job... really would, but not as Mrs. Kiley with you on the staff, too. Just wouldn't work, so that's that.

Your letter was super... perfect, as always. You always make me feel as if you took me along with you. What a swell deal to be able to go over in the "plush job." Your luck in comfort seems to be holding out. The seventeen empty seats makes me ill when I think of it. We'll probably have to get down on our knees and "praise Allah" or someone before we find a way to get over.

I went to the Red Cross today and had an interview. I didn't give her any information... and only asked if you could select the theatre to be sent to and the answer was no. Tomorrow I'm going to check on the International Business Machine Co.; they have an office in Paris. I think that will be our safest bet... a private industry. Oh, I do want to be with you as soon as possible. Jane is so positive there will be a way. She frightens me a little, because if it doesn't work out I'm afraid her disappointment will be awful to see. I'm not discouraging ... far be it for me to do that... but I do realize there is one chance in a million of going over within the year. Regardless, I'm going to be prepared for any opportunity I can find.

I took the yellow slipcovers over to 195 and washed them tonight. We are going to clean the apartment good for Xmas. We plan to have a tree and a few decorations to make it look festive, but I'm afraid it will only be an effort. I dread the thoughts of the holidays without you. Tom must be en route to Greenland or there, by now. El didn't hear any more after he was sent to Maine. We're going shopping Thursday night. We'll have dinner out. I think Jane will go with us. Both Jane and I will go to 195 for Xmas.

We've been sitting here recalling little things about you two. I'm afraid we miss you both very much. We're doing our best to be happy but it's only turning out "a fair job." It would have been awful without her... having so much in common makes a lot of difference.

I thought really that you knew I was writing you, but I can see where you might have thought it was Mom. I'll tell you a secret... I knew you were writing to me. I would have been terribly disappointed if that letter hadn't been written. Do you mind?



Charles in Scotland training with the Commandos. April, 1943.

I feel like a 4F... took the morning off to go to the Blood Donor place and after going through all the routine I was rejected. My blood count wasn't high enough. I have to wait another month. She said it was probably too soon after the last time. I was disappointed.

Enclosed is a picture you may remember. El found them. Since there is a copy of this, I'm sending it on to you.

I couldn't help but remember your posing in just that way. I loved every second we were together. We had so much... have so much, I can say.

I love you, darling. Please, please help me find a way for us to be together.

Goodnight, for a bit. I love you.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

December 5, 1944—Germany [Eddie's last letter]

Dear Ray,

Well, by now you know I am back with my old outfit. I know El always shows you my letters when I write home and I try to write to them as often as I can to keep them from worrying. I hope you are ok and I am sorry I haven't written to you sooner.

When I was back in the rear in the hospitals [Eddie had been wounded in September] and replacement pools I used to go to Mass quite often. In fact, I used to go every night and also served the Mass. It felt good and I used to think back when I was a kid and used to be an altar boy. It sure makes a fellow feel good to go a lot, especially when he has to go up to the front again. We don't get much chance to go up here.

Right now we are on a little rest period and I am catching up on my mail. I told El that I didn't receive any mail while I was in the hospital, but I did get one from her yesterday. she tells me Brother is on his way over here again, so I wrote him the other night.

Johnny Ryan's brother got killed over in the southwest Pacific. He was in the Air Corps. Johnny is ok, and still with us. Have you heard anything from his wife? I understand she did have the baby baptized.

How are your basketball teams coming along? I guess a lot of the players you had on your big team are in the service now. What are your chances in the leagues this year? I remember last year you did ok with all the teams.

El also tells me Pop has lumbago again. I hope he hasn't got it too bad? I know he always did get it every winter.

I guess you know I saw Bill Whorley [?] while I was at the hospital. He is connected with it and I used to go to the movies and hang around down at his quarters with he and some other fellows from Jersey. They all asked me a million questions on how it was up at the front and how I got wounded and whatnot.

That's about all for now. I hope you are ok and take care of yourself, and may God bless you.

As ever,

Eddie

December 5, 1944—Paris

Hello sweetheart

Big day today, and how! I received your letter No. 2 as well as my glasses. Sure enough, I figured you had a note tucked in the case, and there it was.

I am enclosing a money order for \$100 together with the picture of Joe, which I forgot to enclose in my last two letters. I'm sending the picture for two reasons. First, for the scrapbook and secondly so you will be able to recognize him. Since I told him (and a few hundred others) how well you cook he began to look forward to one of your dinners. Moreover, Joe says he would like to give you a Christmas present and believes a can of Crisco most appropriate for a good cook. He refuses to take my word for your unsurpassed touch with food, though, until he sees how you serve potatoes. I told him I wouldn't tip you off but he prefers baked potatoes.

Incidentally, orders are being made now for the return of Joe, Hodenfield and one of the sports writers named Gene Graff. They expect to be home before Christmas. Of course, that means Andy, Carl and Giblin will be coming back about three weeks after they arrive.

Now that Joe has been taken care of here in the "lead" of the letter, I'll go on to say what I wanted to in the beginning... after telling you once more, sweetheart, that I love you so very much and miss you terribly, as always.

The money order represents the \$30 I brought with me, plus my huge November salary of \$9.00, a little back per diem (we don't get it here) I had coming to me and the result of a little luck I had in a card game the other night. With the money, I would like you to buy a "scrumptious" Christmas present. I had hoped to be able to get something over here for you for Christmas and your birthday; then, hope they got back in time. But there isn't anything worthwhile that I can see to buy. And will you forgive me for not being a very good Santa Claus this year?

Still no word on our future operations so I'm still doing a little bit here and there in the office while we're waiting.



You may be wondering what I'm doing for amusement. Well, I've been to four movies in the last four nights, which gives you an idea. Usually, I go to the office after lunch and remain there until 8:00 or 8:15, then catch the second show in the GI movie on the Champs Elysees. It's only about five minutes from the office. Most of the desk crew wait until the paper goes "to bed" at 10:30, then have their 11:00 snack in the restaurant mess. After the show, we join them there.



Earl, Jim Grad (whom you don't know) and I saw "Doughgirls" tonight. Last night it was "Bathing Beauty," the night before, a French movie and the night before that, it was "Marriage by Mistake."

I've given up the "midnight snack" except to have a bowl of cereal, usually oatmeal, and coffee. I'll soon show you, my love, how to lose those 14 pounds. The boys are still calling me "Butterball" because I look so much heavier now than I did four months ago.

I met one of the captains coming into the office this afternoon and he remarked, "Charlie, you are the healthiest-looking thing I've seen in the E.T.O." I didn't know whether it was a compliment or a dig at my double chin.

Before we got tangled up in this hit or miss conversation, I wanted to talk to you a bit on your beautiful letter. I could almost hear you talking about those things as if you were here.

You came right into my heart with that letter, Billee, dearest.

So, may I wait until tomorrow before talking about it? I would like to hold you close and talk lots about it. And, we'll have more time tomorrow. It's 2:15 a.m. now, I'm sitting in this heatless room in my flannel 'jamas and robe and looking at your picture.

You are such an adorable angel, Mrs. K. Remind me to tell you why I always kissed you three times when I said, "Goodnight."

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

December 5, 1944—New York

My dearest,

I always seem to be writing at the weirdest hours but I need you tonight and this is as close as I can get to you.

Carl and the Colonel have pestered the daylights out of me about the job in the office. I wish I could talk to you for five minutes to get your reaction. There are so many pros and cons. I still come back with the same thought, that you wouldn't appreciate my being there. The job itself I know I would love and I know I could handle it all right, but... oh well, I'll just say no again and tell them that's final. The money is good, too, but I have a feeling the hours will be long. I wouldn't mind that though... again, it's no.



Jane and I went to a double feature and saw "Laura." Really good. If you have an opportunity, see it, but make sure you see it from the beginning.

We answered an ad in the Villager that a French tutor had... seems whoever it is teaches the Army method. We call in the morning about it.

You know, I haven't had a letter from Mom in nearly three weeks and as usual, I'm worried.

About the Time subscription... they won't accept any more 'til January 8. I thought it was all taken care of because I did it about a week before you left. Today they gave me back the money and slip... so we'll have to send them.

I'm mailing another package in the morning. I just remembered I forgot to put the lead in... darn. But I'll have to send another in a few days so I'll send it along.

It's warmer than it was and all the stars are out tonight. It was nice walking from Eighth to Seventh Avenue. I always seem to miss you more walking down that direction. My feet seem to want to go 309-wards.

We tried a couple of more leads today. You know, you shouldn't be surprised if I turn up at the office one day, maybe for lunch. We might have it at a little sidewalk cafe. I always seem to associate those with Paris.

I think I can sleep now. Dreamed all last night of you. Maybe tonight will be the same. I wish I could find words to tell you how I'm missing you and I love you so very much. Goodnight, darling.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

December 6, 1944—Paris

Billee dearest,

Last night I said I wanted to talk about your letter, written the night we left. I want to do more than talk of it, sweetheart, but it is the same old story we know so well and this is the best we can do.

Billee, if ever anyone wanted, or felt the need of, words such as you spoke in your “good-bye,” yours could not be equaled, believe me.

Perhaps I am prejudiced because you are mine and because I know your words came right out of your heart. And, they were beautiful.

Most every night, Billee, I try to think of so many ways by which I can make you happy and try to give you the love you deserve so very much.

I know, you will say, “just being together is enough,” and it is. But, I so want to give you more than “enough.” I don’t necessarily mean giving you material things, but much more of me.

You said our last day together meant so much to you. You can imagine how much I just wanted to be alone with you, away from people and everything but us. I know somehow that would be our real “Goodbye.” And I loved you so.

Well, it didn’t take us very long to talk tonight, did it? I’ll come calling on you tomorrow night, though. You can rely on that.

And, don’t worry about me. I promise not to stick my neck out too far.

Good night, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

December 7, 1944—New York

My darling

This is the third time I’ve written the above date. I’m almost sure I’ve written you the two previous years. Even I didn’t think it would go on this long.

Your wonderful letter written the 19th was waiting for me as well as one from Mom. That was a relief to hear from her after all this time.

I had thought that you probably flew to Paris... lots better than the boat trip across the channel. Only an hour and a half. We’re such a few hours away from each other. Makes me sick inside. I’m going to have to get a job at LaGuardia.

I’m anxious to see the story on the home front. Col. Llewellyn had all the wives put on the free list for the Paris edition... that is if Carl carried out his orders.

The Frosts sound amazing. When I hear about things like the V1 bombing and the results I get sick inside because I’ve done so little... rolled a few bandages, a few pints of plasma, and a little money.

Waiting for you is the extent of the effect of the war on me. Warren, of course, too. I've done nothing of any real benefit. That leaves an unsatisfied feeling inside.

Could you give me an idea of sizes for Mrs. Frost and family? I could send them things... underwear, more stockings that are hard to get. I could send them through the Stars and Stripes A.P.O. I wrote her a note and enclosed it in the card. I thought that would be all right. I sent them airmail several days ago but I thought they might just get there in time for Xmas.

El came over tonight. We had waffles and sausages; then, braved Macy's for shopping. I was able to get frames for the pictures and books for Marty's Janie and little Johnny. I decided to send Billy and Sherry turtles and the aquarium they have down there at the shop. Billy will be confined so much this winter he will enjoy them, I know.

I bought more cards... I hope there will be enough this time. We have another wedding present but I don't know from whom... no card... but a lovely hand-painted vase.

I bought my first bottle of liquor today at Macy's. For an old rummy like me that's pretty good. We decided we'd better have some for over the holidays.

We're going to dinner with the Rooneys tomorrow night after our French lessons. We're getting to be a couple of social butterflies. We have so many things booked ahead. I still can't help feeling very humble and a little ashamed for being maybe a little selfish about you going back. I've heard of so many that are less fortunate than we are. I guess that we're the luckiest two people in the world to have our kind of love. Do you have a good feeling inside in spite of the loneliness we feel? You must or else I wouldn't feel this way.

I had to laugh reading about you going straight home from the Frosts. I hear via Benny that you were very happy at the Lamb and Lark on Sunday. However, you were able to write a letter, whereas Benny said "even Charles was drunk."

Jane is in seventh heaven with her letter. Every time I look at her, she's reading it over. Quite a change from last night. I know now how my family must have felt seeing my long face when it was a "no letter today" day.

I was wondering how you felt being away and now I know. Jane has been leading me such a merry chase with her gadding, I miss you all the more. I would like to sit quietly and be with you and I can't when she's going every minute, but she seems to be happier going all the time. Oh, I love you so. Even more so when I know we feel the same way about us. I'd love so to have your hand to hang on to... to have you hold me... just to be with you. I do miss you terribly, with both our obsessions we'll never be very far away from one another.

More than anything, I miss being tucked in at night. I can't remember far enough back to when Mom did it but I remember that night I stayed at 195, your Mom bringing El and me a tray of milk and cake and tucking us in. Now I have you tucking me in, except now I have to do a little dreaming. But if I'm very quiet and dream real hard, I know I'll be tucked in with a goodnight kiss.

All my love and kisses, always your sweetheart

December 7, 1944—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

Another great day, angel. Your Nos. 5 and 6 came to give me a half hour of conversation and lovemaking with my favorite glamour puss. I say a half hour because after I read your letters once, I go back to the beginning and read them over slowly.

They were sort of “anniversary” letters, too. I remember two weeks ago today and our last few hours together. They don’t seem so long ago, either. They were glorious hours that always will live, darling.

Just now, you are sound asleep, or should be, with your pretty little head on the pillow. It’s one o’clock here but 6 a.m. where you are.

If you hadn’t noticed, hon, we’re getting six and seven-day service with the incoming mail, which doesn’t give me room for one tiny complaint.

Your mention of getting tickets to the Ice Follies from Ray Roche [from the Jersey Journal] reminded me to tell you of a letter I received yesterday from him.

He said Mel was leaving to go to another paper, the Elizabeth Journal, which tends to ease a ticklish situation in the office. Ray said Mel had been pressing for one raise after another and official recognition as assistant sports editor, which didn’t make Ray or the managing editor very happy. The fact is they are holding that job open for me, if I want it, according to Ray.

I answered Ray’s letter today and after thanking him for sending you the tickets, said matter-of-factly that I was flattered to be considered but did not intend to make any post-war commitments until I turned in my uniform. In appreciation of the consideration, however, I promised to listen to whatever plans included me. I think it was a proper answer, don’t you, sweetheart?

It may develop that I’ll be damned glad to take the Journal offer. I don’t know. But I’ll keep the iron hot, anyway.

Billee, let’s hear more on your idea to try and join a government agency, such as those you mentioned in the same breath with French lessons and a possible trip over here.

I know Jane and Meg Hanson were interested but wasn’t aware that you were. Mind you, I’m not speaking my mind because I don’t know what you’re thinking. Can you give me particulars?

I finally saw Pete Hanson today and gave him the packages I brought over. He was in Paris on a brief trip from Liege. I haven’t seen Morrow Davis, though. He’s been with the 9th Army for more than a month without coming back here.

The letter from Johnny Joyce was interesting in that it cleared up the mystery as to whether he made good as an aviation cadet or not. Had a letter from Jack Donnell in Italy, too. He believes he may be going home soon but has no idea when it will be.

The mystery of Dunbar's disappearance is being discussed all over the office, each and every amateur Sherlock Holmes offering solutions. One says Margaret must have eaten him. Bob believes he fell out the window. Benny says, "you better find him, or else."

Joe, who expects to leave within two days, says he's going home to bring to justice the "meanest" man or woman who kidnapped Dunbar. Moreover, he wishes to remind suspects in the case of the "Lindberg Law" which carries with it a life sentence if convicted.

Me? I think Dunbar got lonesome for his girlfriend back in the shop and after discovering Margaret was a "he" took off to join his estranged sweetheart.

I'll be back tomorrow, beautiful. I love you... miss you more than ever. May I have your hand?

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

December 8, 1944—New York

Darling,

(Letter number 6 arrived today; 4 and 5 missing.)

Now we know how Meg and Libby felt being with us because tonight Andy and Marg took us to dinner. Carl came along to sort of balance the party.

I missed you horribly then. I do, though, when Jane and I go out. That's only one of the times. We enjoyed it, though. Of course, we talked about you and Benny.

Too, it would have been amusing... the little byplay that went on trying to get me to accept the Star & Stripes job, if you had been there. The girl that was going to take the job changed her mind. Marg Rooney is helping them out for the present. I think she has something in mind to take her overseas; that's why she isn't taking a position anywhere.

One thing, even if you would approve, I think it would spoil any opportunity I might get to go over.

We went to the French teacher but decided to go to the school. After seeing her and learning how much the lessons would be, we decided to spend the money at Berlitz and know that it was a reliable place. So, we register tomorrow and probably start Monday.

Tuesday we go to Newark to see the results of the blood, sweat and tears of Father John. I'm so mad... I haven't been able to find any film for him.

We stay so busy, almost too busy to suit me. I don't mind being alone. We have such a nice place to live. I love these minutes I spend with you at the end of the day.

You know what I thought of... that day we took the sunbath and you turned the hose on me. I'll never forget how cold that water was and how much I loved you. I'm so happy we had those quiet days at home. They were wonderful. We'll have so many more wonderful days. This is just the

beginning of Mr. and Mrs. Kiley. Again, I can say we must be the two most fortunate people on earth... not being prejudiced but I think we have something very, very special.

I love hearing about every little thing.. the restaurant, getting lost going to Mass, the hours you work and just everything. Don't leave anything out, will you?

Andy was surprised to hear you were leaving Paris; then, thought perhaps you might edit the new edition since Bud wanted to write again. Is that what you wanted? I want you to be happy with your work. I've been thinking about your desk work, and being confined, and how much you disliked it in London. So, I know you will use your own good judgment along those lines but remember I want you to be as happy as you can be with your work.

Marge is due to come in for the weekend tomorrow. It will be a quiet one, I imagine. We plan to go out for dinner tomorrow night and maybe do away with a steak Sunday at home.

I was able to get the nicest picture frames. Got one order of pictures from [the wedding photographer] that arrived today but forgot when I bought the frames that they were going the wrong way. Now I'll have to get the others... darn. I'll give these to Dot, Berta and Marty since their respective husbands are present in them.

I miss you so at night. I guess we're going through the same motions... being tucked in and my goodnight kiss. I miss awfully not being able to snuggle up to you. I miss your horseplay.. the shadow boxing and touching your toes besides all the other things... I could go on and on.

I love you so, so very much. Please take special care of my sweetheart and please, remember, all my love and prayers are with you. Goodnight, my darling.

All my love and kisses, always, your Billee

December 9, 1944—New York

My darling,

Tonight walking down 14th from the subway, I wanted so to continue down to 309 and find you waiting for me with dinner started or just waiting as you usually did... in your robe and coming out of the kitchen as I opened the door.

The place was awful but it would look like heaven to see you in the easy chair with your smile... so comfortable... and letting me crawl up on your lap.

This has been the worst day for missing you, in spite of Marge and going out to eat.

Marge is asleep now and Jane is under the shower. I've had mine. I've sort of taken over your robe. Do you mind?

We went to Sevilla, the Spanish place Jane and Benny went to. What a swell dinner and job gobs of stuff... and everything so good. Chicken and rice. I know you would have liked it. I couldn't get over getting everything for a dollar. We were there about an hour and a half but we were in no hurry. We ended up in some little junk shop on Fourteenth. They had an ex-soldier behind the

counter and he was fit to be tied... muttering to himself about getting a machine gun and shooting everyone like he did the Japs. Seems the customers were complaining about the luxury tax.

We bought the Sunday papers and came back home and relaxed. I did more Christmas cards... still have some to do.

I missed your letter, too, but I've had four this week so I should not complain. They are such wonderful letters. I think I'd fold up if you were like the other husbands about writing. Don't think I could take that very well.

I found a present for you I think you'll like. I'll enclose it with the other little item I found and send it via Stars and Stripes.

Jane isn't sleepy tonight either. I think she's missing her "little husband" as much as I'm missing you, if that's possible.

Since I'm the shortest, I'm sleeping on the sofa tonight. We're going to sleep nice and late in the morning and go to a late Mass. We won't have to go 2 1/2 miles to the "eglise" as you did. We might just go around the corner to the Spanish church.

Did you happen in there any time? It's very small and quiet. I liked it. The priest translates the Spanish when he reads the epistle and gospel. He has such an uncomfortable accent.

We registered at Berlitz today and we start Monday with a 2 1/2 hour lesson then go on Wednesday and Friday. We are going to study like mad and with the incentive we have, I'm sure we'll get along.

I'm anxious to hear about Liege. Carl and Andy seemed surprised that you were leaving Paris. I think you'll probably find the new edition more interesting if you are going to do desk work and with fewer people around you will probably gain more experience.

Jane and I have decided we don't like trotting around with girls. We'd like our husbands escorting us much better.

I hope Benny is writing Jane now. She needs his letters more than he realizes. She practically memorized the only one she has.

You may tuck me in now. I'm tired... I'd like snuggling up to you to get warm for a few minutes or longer, then a goodnight kiss. I love you so very much and I'm missing you even more.

All my love and kisses, always your sweetheart

December 10, 1944—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

Remind me never even to look at you without whispering, "adorable angel." Why, I hardly expected to get any mail for weeks when I left and here it is only a couple of weeks and I've had six letters from you already.

Nos. 4 and 8 came together yesterday. As yet, No. 7 hasn't arrived. No. 4 was held up while the Post Office was playing around with the "Seine Base Command" on the address. While it is technically part of the address, I find that when it is addressed simply to "The Stars and Stripes, A.P.O. #887," it gets here quicker. No. 8, post-marked Dec. 2, took only six days!!!

Carl's cable today mentioned "Larsen et Rooneys wined dined cum villagers Friday." A couple of days ago he said you all were going bowling over the weekend. My, my... aren't we getting athletic?

By now, you must know Joe is home. He should have reached New York early today. If he has delivered the package to you, it is evident that you aren't to open it until Dec. 26, and I do mean Dec. 26! There isn't anything that is likely to be broken, and if it is we can't do anything about it now.

I had a swell day, on our day off yesterday, sweetheart. But, I was sooooo soooo tired at the end of it I eased myself into bed, completely lacking the energy to do anything except say, "Goodnight, sweetheart" at your picture.

I started the day by visiting the Louvre. The world-renowned art treasures haven't been restored yet but there is still much to be seen, especially in the way of sculpture and centuries-old stone from Egypt, Rome, Athens, Persia, etc. It would take a week to cover the whole of the Louvre so you can imagine what I saw in two hours.

From there, I went to Notre Dame and was a little disappointed, hon, not at the cathedral because its age makes it magnificent. But it was the commercial stain that sort of deflated me. As soon as you enter the door, someone eases up and asks if you want a guide... to walk through a church, mind you. Further on is

an enclosed alcove with a relic of the true cross, sundry chalices donated by kings and emperors down through the years. A beautiful collection of all the popes in cameos in there. Relics of several



The most well-known pieces from the Louvre remained hidden until 1945. Above, the Winged Samothrace in its shipping crate.

French saints. Frankly, I was a little awed. But I had to pay some man five francs to see these things. It wasn't the 10 cents but it all seemed out of place to me.

Of course, they do the same thing in the Westminster Abbey in London, but that still doesn't make it right.

In the afternoon, I slummed around Montmartre where Bob's "apache" used to, and maybe still does, sock his women around. It all looked pretty dirty to me.

Ah, then the piece de resistance.



The Folies Bergere in the 1940s

Last night, I went to the famous "Folies Bergere" and enjoyed it a lot. Perhaps I should say there were too many women appearing and disappearing throughout the show with nothing but complete nakedness from the waist up... but that's part of the "Folies Bergere," they say.

The chorus was pretty, lively and talented, the scenes were beautiful, the leading comedian excellent and the comedienne exceptional. The music also was very entertaining. It was what you would expect in Paris.

Mind you, this was no burlesque, although parts of the show were along those lines. It was the scenery and tableaux, I guess, that lifted it from the burlesque level.

I was lucky to get a box seat (I would, wouldn't I?) for 130 francs (\$2.60) since the theatre always is sold out for at least five days in advance. My good fortune came from someone who cancelled a reservation.

I should have said before that, my day was shared with two others, Paul Horowitz, ex-Newark News and Joe Cotten. Both are recent additions to the staff. I'm working on the sports page and makeup until I move on to Liege.

Incidentally, Bud and I together with Bill Spear, a desk man with whom you aren't familiar, are making a four-day trip to Liege, starting tomorrow. It's an eight-hour trip by jeep so we're getting an early start.

It's been rainy and cold but I'll be well protected on the trip. Long johns, wool pants and shirt, sweater, leather jacket, Bob's lined all-purpose coat, boots, gloves, wool cap, and a couple of blankets. I know just what you're saying, darling... "Be careful." Sure will, you can rely on it. So, don't worry one little bit and I'll be back soon. I'll try to write while I'm up there but we have a helluva lot of work to do in the short space of time and I don't know when I'll have 15 minutes to write. I'll be missing you an awful lot. Like last night when my back needed scratching and I couldn't even find a good door to rub on.

I'll have lots and lots to talk about when I get back, especially so with all the mail that will be waiting. And, here I haven't even mentioned anything from the two I got yesterday. I'll cover them all at once. But, thanks for the columns. I'd like those Monday columns of Dan Packer's if you can think of sending them.

Come on into my arms and curl up for a few minutes before I have to put you back on the desk for the night. Fine state of affairs when you have to leave your bunny perched on a desk all night... cold night, too... when she could snuggle up and keep you warm.

So, goodnight, sweetheart. Miss me and love me.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

December 10, 1944—New York

Darling,

This has been by far the worst weekend for missing you. I'm glad it's over. This makes me want to try all the harder to get over. We just weren't meant to be separated.

I kept thinking of so many little things we did. Tonight, seeing Marge off at Penn Station was an ordeal. I fairly flew out after she left... just couldn't take any more of that.

I went window shopping with Marge today from 34th to 58th streets, up and down, but it was good to be in the air and I enjoyed seeing all the pretty things.

Tomorrow I'm taking half the day off to finish our shopping. I can't seem to work up any enthusiasm. Usually, I have ideas but not this time.

I've read and reread your last letter and it's so wonderful. I can almost recite it.

I felt pretty low today but the news is so confused. I think I got a little discouraged.

I'm fine now... practically in your arms. I can see you wrinkle your nose at me.

Did you know you had a special "look" for me? Every now and then, I'd catch this look on your face... in a restaurant, across our own table or out. I always wondered what you might be thinking but knew it was nice. Please, tuck me in and here's my goodnight kiss. I'm really sleepy now but miss you so.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

[NB: A number of letters from Billee for December 1944 must have been lost after Charles received them.]

December 14, 1944—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

I got back from Liege tonight after an eight-hour jeep ride in freezing weather. I've been thawing out for a couple of hours until now and it is one a.m. Friday. Yes, I'm tired, but I just couldn't go to bed without talking with you for a bit.

There is so much to cover I'm sure it will take a couple of days, so I'll postpone anything about the trip until I have caught up with your letters.

Before I left there were your Nos. 4 and 8 and when I got in tonight, Benny had saved for me your Nos. 7, 12 and 13, plus a note with an anniversary card, Christmas cards from El, Tom and Annice, and a letter which I will discuss later.

Let's start from the beginning.

No. 4 was written only two days after we left and you had received word of our arrival in London. That seems so long ago because so much has happened since then and because every day apart from you seems like a month, honestly.

I enjoyed the Considine and Parker columns a lot, hon. In a previous letter, I believe I asked you to send Parker's Monday column each week.

In No. 8, you said Carl reported Benny and I taking a few days off to see Paris. Hell, I've spent only one day sightseeing and it was a Saturday day off, and I doubt if Benny even devoted a day to the specific purpose of "seeing the city." If he did, I didn't hear about it. He is working full time on the Paris desk now, while I'm simply helping where I can and preparing for the move to Liege.

You asked me if I would rather not hear how you felt... long lonely, miss-you hours when you think of us together and the chill of wanting someone near sweeps over you.

Yes, sweetheart, I would prefer you to keep those thoughts to yourself but only if you say you don't love me. That should answer the question, shouldn't it?

I'm just as happy as I could be, Billee, to hear of you having dinner here and there, concerts at the Town Hall and anything else that would make you smile.

From the cable Carl sent, I was able tonight to sort of get an idea what this job in the N.Y. office was all about because the jump in your letters from 8 to 12 left me for the present without too much detail.

I gather Marg Rooney is working there now, which must have got Carl off your neck. The cables said you had dinner with Llewellyn and, after several interviews with unqualified candidates, he put the finger on you for the job.

Perhaps, it is just as well that you turned it down, hon. I don't know. But, even though you wanted my opinion on it I'm really to leave it in your hands. If you want it... okay. If not, that's fine, too. Of course, I realize I'm being a big help here with an answer like that.

I'm going to say "goodnight," after talking about the letter I had waiting when I got back tonight. My eyes are heavy, and I'm awfully tired. Tomorrow, I have several things to cover and I'll be able to do them with a clear head. One of them is about you hoping to come over here. I haven't said much about it but I can now.

The letter was from the "Harry Sherman Productions, Los Angeles, Cal." It said my "Molotov" story had appeared in "True" Magazine by courtesy of the N.Y. Times and the studio thought it would be good motion picture material. Moreover, they want to know if I'll sell the story to them.

My position is this:

1. I don't know anything about selling the story to a studio.
2. I don't know how reputable the studio is (never heard of it).
3. I don't know what the Times would have to say about it.

I talked it over with Bud and he suggested letting his agent handle it. Since I haven't got anything to lose I consented, and Bud was going to cable the agent and have him carry the ball from there. As soon as I hear something about it, I'll let you know.

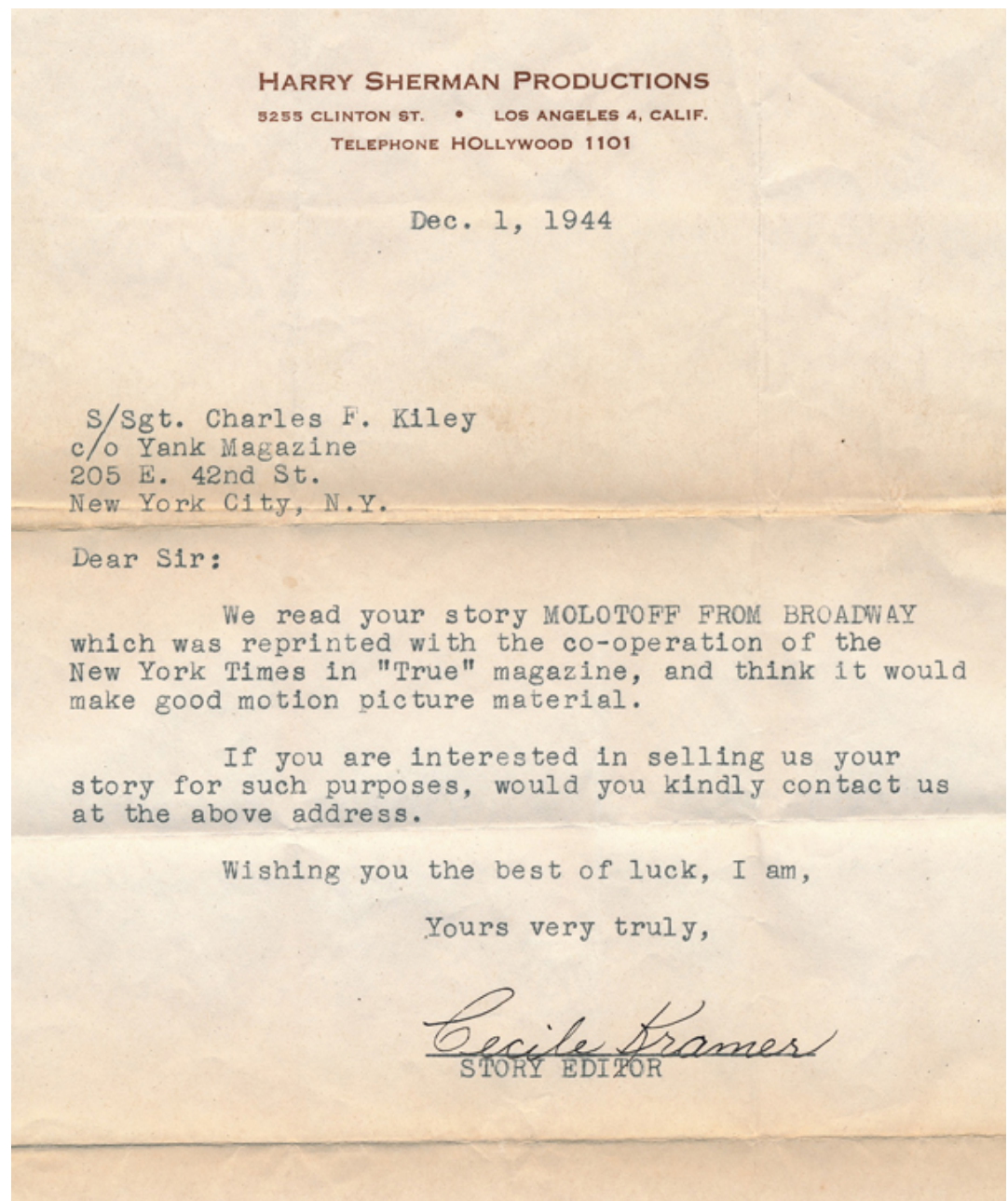
Now, don't get excited about it. I'm not. Chances are, the studio is a tenth-rate or that nothing will ever be done on it. So, let's just go along as if nothing happened and if it does it will be that much better.

And, please don't say anything for the time being. If nothing develops it won't hurt if nobody knows of it.

So... until tomorrow.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles



December 15, 1944—Paris

Billee dearest,

Last night, or I should say, early this morning, we left off talking about the letter from Los Angeles. Tonight, I want to go into your latest letters: 7, 12 and 13. I am missing 9, 10, and 11 but I can't complain. I seem to be the only one in the office who is getting any recent mail. It certainly was a relief to hear my mail finally got through. Of course, it only was the first one but there are others on the way at least. You are way out in front of me because of my lapse caused by the trip to Liege.

Your letters are meaning more to me than ever before. Not in just the ordinary sense, either. Every day brings new pictures of misery, chicanery, out-and-out thievery, bawdiness, dirt, suffering... that I almost need your letters to remind me there is something worthwhile and beautiful in the world.

The trip to Liege had a lot to do with the sting of disgust that has come over me in the last week. I started to feel it after being here only a couple of days.

Paris, and all of France, for that matter, may have been nice places before the war. I hope so, because if there is anything cheaper, dirtier or low it is Paris right now. I don't mean to say all of it is like that. But I haven't seen a square inch of the continent I liked yet. It is mainly a struggle for existence with everybody. I wouldn't trust a soul in all of France, or Belgium for that matter, as far as I could place kick him.

The worst of many stories I have heard concerns about 250 officers and men in the army, attached to a railway unit, who have been nailed after carrying out one of the biggest black market rackets in history, for several months.

Men are dying, losing the most priceless thing they have... life... while this handful of skunks sell their food, cigarettes, gasoline, medical supplies and God only knows what else to our "liberated Allies."

In Liege, where signs are being hung all over the city hailing the "liberators," it isn't safe to leave a monkey wrench down in fear of it being stolen. More than one of the French drivers the paper hired to haul the papers by truck from Paris to Liege has been caught stealing and selling gasoline.

And everywhere, is the soldier looking for a woman. People say it's all part of war, but I never expected to see humanity degraded as it is here.

So, sweetheart, if I sound bitter it's just that I want to get somewhere and fill my lungs with fresh air. It stinks something awful.

I have all this in mind when I think of you wanting to come over. It isn't a sordid outlook to discourage you. I want you as near as possible and as quickly as possible. But, if you were to ask me tonight what I thought of you coming tomorrow, I believe I'd say, "no."

This place, as it is today, may be for the so-called international cafe society. Just give me that house in the country... in America, too.

Darling, knowing how much you are bent on coming over here, I'm nevertheless asking you not to make any definite plans on it. If that one chance in a million did come, it would be an adventure for you but one that I'd rather you didn't have.

God knows I'm lost without you but I'd rather suffer loneliness than have you tangled up in this mess. I don't know what Benny has been telling Jane. I haven't asked him and I don't pretend to know whether or not he wants her to come. But, whatever his plans are they have nothing to do with what I have said. Unless he has had the same impression, it may be best not to say anything to Jane. I wouldn't want either of them to get the impression I was indirectly trying to make up Jane's mind.

[REST OF LETTER MISSING]

December 16, 1944—Paris

Dear Ray,

I'm still piled up to here with "no time at all" but I've got to get this off now or put it off for another week or so. Since I arrived I've been pitching in on the sports desk and preparing for another "launching" of a new edition in Liege, Belgium. I spent four days there this week and figure to take off for good in a few days. It will be the biggest edition of all, servicing all front line troops, including the First, Third and Ninth Armies. The Seventh will be handled by the guys from the Mediterranean Stars and Stripes who have been working with the Seventh since it landed in southern France. In Liege, I'll run sports and work on makeup, also whatever other desk work is necessary while we're shorthanded. Yeah, I know, it's a good job for the winter. Believe me, it's cold up front these days and pity the poor doughfoots (or feet) who are tangled up in the middle of it.

This is what is on my mind though. I got a letter from a Hollywood outfit the other day asking me if I wanted to sell the Molotov story. Being in a rather peculiar position, not being able to transact business some 7,000 miles from the scene, I am at a loss. Bud helped a bit by cabling his agent, Steve Slesinger, and asking him to handle the deal if he can.

I don't know whether or not the outfit is a fly-by-nighter, or what a good deal consists of, or anything else about it.

I'll give you all the dope and if I hear that Slesinger can't handle it I'll give you the green light, power of attorney, and whatever else to take it up from there. In the meantime, I'll write to the outfit and advise them to handle it through you if they don't hear from Slesinger within a month. So, just sit tight and when they write, ask for a contract. If it looks good, sign it and send it back before they change their minds. If they haven't a copy of the story you can get it in the Stars and Stripes file of May 1944, either the one you have or one at 205 East 42nd St.

It all sounds kind of fishy to me but maybe something will come out of it.

Had a letter from Eddie yesterday and while at Liege may get a chance to run into him. I don't think he's more than 50 miles north of there. If he is, he's behind German lines, which isn't likely, and is AWOL from healthy territory.

K.

PS: I've been serving Mass daily for the last four days in a chapel here. Canyaimagine, after 18 years?

December 16, 1944—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

Today's mail brought two pieces that look like they might be Christmas cards to me and since I won't have any packages to open on that day, I'm going to save them. I just have to hope they aren't anything that has to be taken care of immediately.

Will you forgive me for being in such a nasty mood last night when I wrote the "book" on "les misérables" of France? I'm not completely over the mood... don't expect to be on that subject... but I feel better about everything in general today. Maybe it's because it's raining again.

I know how anxious you are to get over, darling. And, I am just as anxious to have you near me. Perhaps, when that "one in a million" shows up, things will be better over here. We'll see and talk about it then.

Meanwhile, I'm off to Liege for good in three days. We hope to turn out the first edition there on Dec. 26. That gives us about a week to get settled and do the million and one things that have to be done to prepare for it.

Benny, as I said before, is staying in Paris with Bob. Hutton and I, together with eighth or nine others will go to Liege. Bud is going to stay there only two weeks, he says, and go back to covering the war from the field. When he leaves, a fellow named Les David, who was with the Brooklyn Eagle and who was added to the staff since the Paris edition started, will run the Liege desk. He's a good man, equally as good as Bob, I think, more dependable but lacks the forcefulness of Hutton. He'll handle the job well, I'm sure.

Say what you will about Hutton, hon, he's the one man in this outfit who can do the job of organizing, then running a show. Nobody comes close to him. His takeoff to the field is due, I believe, to his ever-present egotism. He misses his byline in the paper, to make a long story short.

According to him, though, he's tired of doing the job for the brass and feels it's high time they got off and shoved for awhile.

Me? I'll be happy where I am for the present.

By handling the sports desk and makeup, I won't have to answer to anyone and I won't be overburdened with responsibility. In this business, I find it's much nicer to stand on the outside and watch everybody else wrangling.

I don't think it would be the *S&S* if complete peace reigned in the family. And, as such, I don't think it would be as much fun as it is.

Until I find out differently, continue to send mail to the same address. Benny will forward it to me with our daily courier. My mail to you is liable to be slower yet than it has been because of the 250 mile difference between Paris and Liege.

Two good features about Liege are coal and ice cream. It may sound like a strange paradox but since Liege is a coal-mining district, we can get more there than here and consequently be much warmer. The ice cream hasn't much of a flavor to it but it isn't bad.

I've written to Father John and the Harry Sherman Productions on the following points:

If Bud's agent can't handle my business, I've told the H.S.P. that John has my power of attorney to close the deal and transact any business.

I have also briefed John on everything and asked him to do it.

Strange, sweetheart, after I wrote to John it occurred to me that I could have asked you to do it. Guess I'm not used to relying on you yet. But, I do wish you would keep in touch with John and give him any help you can.

Somehow, I have a feeling nothing will ever come of it, anyway.

Andy is supposed to contact the agent and let me know what the score is. So, if you keep after him you will be able to keep abreast of my progress on it.

It's the kind of a deal that should be closed quickly, I think, so I'll rely on you to keep after everybody... Andy, the agent, and John.

I saw "Laura" at the GI theatre here tonight and enjoyed it a lot, just as you said I would. I thought Clifton Webb stole the picture. The big lug (Vincent Price) was an all-American tackle at Southern Cal., believe it or not.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

December 17, 1944—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

And a very happy anniversary to you, Mrs. Kiley.

Sorry I wasn't in a position to send you a card or cable but I'm sure you knew where my thoughts were today... all day. I thought of sending an EFM [?] but learned they had been discontinued until after Christmas.

I started our fifth month with Mass and Communion this morning and am finishing it in a fashion that reminds me of 309.

Since I'm leaving for Liege on Tuesday, I couldn't send my laundry out this week and have it back in time. So... a little back-bending over the tub, a line stretched across the room and a GI wash hanging up to dry.

Do you know what I was thinking about last night?

After I talked with you awhile and slipped into bed, I thought back five months ago to the night before August 17.

I never did tell you how full of contentment I was that night. I am reminded of a lot of other things I didn't tell you and the only excuse I have is that I was too pre-occupied telling you something else.

I remember after saying “goodnight” to Dot and Al and lying in bed that I could almost feel... actually feel... the happiness around me like tiny heat waves.

Thoughts of how we met, how much we suffered the months and years of separation, the countless times I felt I couldn't stand it any longer, the cold nights in the field and the too many lonely nights in London.

Then the days of privation and dirt and horror and noise and action in Normandy.

All these moved before my mind that night. I thought, “It's been a long time.” How long? The longest I hope I ever have to wait for anything.

And, there I was... only 12 hours from having everything a being could want... from being the wealthiest man ever, in one respect, because someone on whom there could not be a material price was going to be my bride.

I remember a day in Maine... how crisp and clean and fresh the fields and trees were after a rainfall. How the whole picture seemed to be starting life all over when the hot sun brought steam from the grass. That's the way it was with me that night, Billee. Yet, you have asked me why I should be grateful for having you.

I'll be lonely, miserable. I'll have heartaches just as before as long as I'm away from you. But, I know I can stand them now. That new life you gave me brought with it strength, and more faith than I ever had.

All those things I thought of last night.

This morning in the little chapel all I saw was you. Not coming up the aisle or sitting at the wedding breakfast or brazenly chasing the Doyles from the hotel room or with your head on my shoulder just before you fell asleep.

No... I saw you as I did while you were kneeling in the sanctuary, the very angel you are.

And, I almost felt your hand in mine.

Darling, we have asked each other if there was ever a love as strong and as beautiful as ours. We've said, “no,” feeling very confident that we were the only lovers in the world.

Yet, I'm sure there must be others whose love is equally as strong.

But, of this I am certain. There isn't any which is one small particle more beautiful than ours.

So, after five months, sweetheart, all I can say is that I love you more than yesterday and less than tomorrow.

Goodnight.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

PS: Hope you liked the birthday gifts, and my pitiful display of Christmas gifts. I'll make it up, honest I will.

This stationery is bound to be gone, perhaps before this reaches you. Will you send me more of the same? It is Hunt's "Air Mail" tablets in Macy's. Need some envelopes, too.

There's an anniversary kiss right here [arrow]. C.

December 23, 1944—New York

My dearest,

A month ago today was the last time I saw you, and somehow it seems longer.

I'm afraid if you were here tonight you'd be running all over the place because I have the sniffles but good this time. Even if you were here and right this minute, I'm glad you can't see me because I don't look like Mrs. K. at all and too I'd have to be writing because I've lost my voice. Isn't that super lousy for the holiday?

I'm to go to 195 tomorrow and bake a pie and cake. I don't know... I'm afraid to be around the baby. I'll see how I feel tomorrow.

You see, I'm sticking to my promise to tell the bad along with the good.

My spirits are good, though, because last night I heard you were back in Paris and would remain there for awhile. I'm so happy to hear the news because since Tuesday I've been more than anxious not hearing any word at all especially since there's been no mail for a week, but that I know is due to the time of year.

The news is better tonight too. I hope and pray it continues so. I'm afraid the casualty list this time will be pretty terrific. In this week's *Time*, I read of the wholesale slaughter of the band of 143 Americans captured by the Germans. Perhaps you have heard the story, but they removed all the personal belongings and distributed them among the Germans, then herded them into an open field and turned machine guns on them. A very few escaped. There isn't any way to describe the way I felt and still feel.

195 has received one letter so far from Eddie written November 21. There's no



Victims of the Malmedy Massacre in Belgium. A US convoy was captured by SS troops; instead of taking the soldiers prisoner, the Germans herded them into a field and shot them. Because of the back-and-forth nature of the battle, the bodies were not recovered until January 1945. An interesting footnote: the commander of the SS troops spent 10 years in prison after the war; when he was released he eventually moved to France, where he was shot to death in 1976 by French resistance veterans.

way of knowing where he is, I suppose.

Believe it or not, Tom is still in Maine. After two weeks of silence, he called El the other night. They are waiting for a plane yet. He had to take a guard to the phone with him and they wouldn't even pay the fellows for fear they'd take a powder. If there is a way possible and he's still there, he'll be home for Xmas. The plan is now that he will go to Greenland for 14 months!

We had a lovely card from Theda and Jack (?) signed by Jack's father, and the nicest letter. I'll send it on to you as soon as I answer it. He must be a very nice person to be so thoughtful.

We have just cleaned like mad today in the apartment... cupboards and stuff in spite of my little cold but I'll be all right. The Christmas tree is all decorated in the corner where the green chair was, next to the window seat. It's on the coffee table. It's an awful nice little tree, just right for us. You'll laugh but I tied all the Christmas cards on the tree with white satin ribbon... made little bows and put on a lot of tinsel. We have no lights but it looks kind of cute this way. Maybe we can figure out a way to take pictures of it for you guys.

How is your cough? I was thinking about that today when I bought some cough medicine. Would you like me to send you some? And how are your hands? I sent the lined gloves especially so you'd stay nice and warm. Is there anything else I might send to help keep you warm? I heard too, about your moving into barracks. Doesn't sound so good, but I'm glad you're in Paris even if it means sleeping on straw mattresses.

Joe Fleming left an enormous box yesterday while I was at 195, with "Do Not Open 'til Dec. 26." I'm fairly bursting from curiosity but I won't open it. Would it be all right if I waited 'til after midnight Christmas night to open it? I don't think I could wait any longer.

Marge sent us the cutest Christmas card. I'll send it on to you. Right now, it has a special place on the tree.

Pop bought a ham and I bought part of it and baked it tonight for Christmas night. Looks and smells simply lush. Wish you were here. I was so mad that the butcher never had a slice of ham for you.

I couldn't possibly have made the trip to Ohio with this cold so I don't feel so bad not going. I'm afraid they would have carted me off in a stretcher.

Bobby Price [Ben Price's brother] came in last night (the first time since Benny's gone) and gave me another pack of cigarettes for your box. He promised to bring me a carton from the P.X. We all went around the corner last night late and had a couple of rye and sodas. Bobby has a cold, too. So we thought it might do them some good. I can just hear you starting... telling me how foolish I was to go out with the cold. I know now that I should have stayed home. Jane was cute. She got quite happy off the four we had and Bobby did, too, I'm afraid... said he hadn't had anything in three months. I missed you horribly... first time since you've gone I've sat up to a bar and I kept thinking you should be there leaning over my shoulder but you weren't and I missed you so.

Still no further word from Andy about the Hollywood deal. I'm sure he'd tell me. Maybe they'll come by during the holidays.

I guess I'd better get ready for bed. Jane's going to rub some glop on my back for me and I'll take a good dose of cough medicine and call it a night. I wish you were here to do it. Wrap me up in your warm robe and tuck me in the way you did at 309.

I love you oh, so much and I'm missing you a million times more. Goodnight, darling.

All my love and kisses, always your sweetheart

December 23, 1944—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

Back again from Liege! This time I'll be here in Paris for an indefinite period. As I see it, it all depends on the German counter-offensive. We reached Liege, all 10 of us, last Tuesday night only to discover that the tactical situation there wasn't very healthy. Nevertheless, we pitched in and got everything in the office squared around and ready to publish. All that was missing was a Paris-to-Liege cable circuit for our teletype. Without a teletype it is impossible to operate, since we must depend on Paris to relay all news, about 20,000 words daily, from New York.

The cable circuit was taken by First Army, which naturally has top priority and isn't likely to turn it over to us until the present situation at the front changes for the better. While in Liege we also had to put up with those things we were ducking in London [V rockets]. So, since we couldn't work, it was decided that our gang would return to Paris and continue to help out there until we can open in Liege.

I came back last night with three others... another 8-hour, frigid jeep trip... and got here about 11:30. I was so cold, I couldn't even think of saying "goodnight" to you, my hands were shaking so much.

As it was, I didn't write while I was in Liege because we were on the "go" so much.

Again, I'm going to ask you to climb into my lap so I can put my arms around you and say, "Forgive me... pretty please?"

I called Benny from Liege during the week and asked him to inform you via Larsen that I was o.k. and returning from Liege. I figured you would be anxious since Liege must have been mentioned in the news getting home.

You probably are wondering how serious the counter-offensive is.

From what I could see, it wasn't serious in that the First Army was in a chaotic state. They bent before the rush of German armor in several sections but they were holding together while giving ground.

Unfortunately, I suppose a lot of our guys were overrun and taken, but I seriously doubt if the push will lose more than another week.

Patton already has jumped in to help Hodges by attacking from the right flank.

Earl came back from Third Army yesterday and said Patton was exploding with, "Hell, why didn't those _____ come at me? If they want to pick on somebody, I'll take care of those _____!!"

Sure enough, the Germans are using the same tactics in this push that Patton used to run through France, and old “Blood and Guts” says, “they must have some smart men running this show.”

Earl doesn’t like him but gives him a lot of credit for getting things done.

Eisenhower, realizing it may need a Patton to check the drive, has given him the green light to “go get ‘em, Georgie.”

I had hoped to have mail waiting for me when I got back but, unfortunately, some for me was sent to Liege yesterday. I sure hope it gets back here soon. I’ve been missing you ever so much. Earl is ribbing me, too. Wants to know if I care to read some of Rita’s letters while I’m waiting.

Maybe some will come this afternoon. If it does, I’ll feel lots better.

I received the billfold last night. It was swell. Benny got it in the envelope and gave it to me. There wasn’t any note, card or anything with it. Just those pennies... and I knew it was from you.

While in Liege, I had hoped to track down Eddie but honestly didn’t have time with the work we had to do. However, I had one of our fellows at First Army checking for me and he reported Eddie’s outfit as not being involved in the counter-offensive. That eased my mind lots.

I’m sure a lot of people are going to wonder what married life has done with my correspondence. Except for one letter to Al and Dot, another to Ray Roche and a third to Father John, I have written only to you and 195.

Personally, that’s the way it will have to be with me for awhile, I’m afraid.

I will write to Mom today, though, and put her on the “must” list immediately.

‘Bye for now, sweetheart. It’s morning and I’ll be back tonight. Keep my place warm and I’ll park my cold puppies next to yours, ok? I’ll even let you wear my ‘jamas and robe. But no curlers. You have to look glamorous tonight.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles



Charles with Earl Mazo, Paris. December 1944

December 23, 1944—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

Back for the second time today. It feels so good to be with you again. I ought to make these “double dates” more often. I didn’t get any mail today but I just know you will come through with a Christmas gift in the form of a letter or two tomorrow. Perhaps the mail that went to Liege will be returned by then. Sure hope so.

Well, the first thing I should tell you is that we are being removed from our hotel on Christmas day. The order from HQ is that all hotels are needed to billet combat troops on leave in Paris. That’s okay with me if they want my room for that purpose. Meanwhile, they picked out a floor of a barren building in which to house us. No heat, double-decker bunks, 10 men to a room. I took one look at it and went out and got a single room in a hotel near the office for 70 francs (\$1.40) a night. I’ll move in there on Christmas. I tried to get Benny a room there, too. But at the time there was only one vacancy.

I still have a little money left to defray the hotel bill until payday. And, I’ll keep the room until I can’t afford it or something better is arranged for us. It’s nothing to get perturbed about because I’ll make out ok.

All this would have been avoided if our plans for Liege went through but after conferring today with Maj. Goodfriend, Llewellyn’s successor, it was decided to abandon the Liege edition until the situation at the front definitely changes for the better. Just now, Liege isn’t a very healthy place in which to be. It’s too bad because we were all set to go with the exception of the all-important communications hookup with Paris.

Morrow Davis came back from the Ninth Army last night and we had a long talk about my visit to those good old United States. I went through a play-by-play description of the wedding, etc., and our dates with Lib [Davis].

By the way, I saw quite a bit of Pete Hanson in Liege, too. He and the other fellows stationed there were getting ready to move back about 50 miles to Charleroi in Belgium. Those “buzzers” in Liege are getting to be anything but a joke.

I’ve been a very good boy lately, sweetheart. Last week I went to Communion and I’ll go again tomorrow and Christmas. If I can, I’ll also continue all next week. There’s an 11:30 Mass in a



Earl Mazo, Charles, Morrow Davis, Paris. December 1944.

GI chapel not far from the office every day and with a little effort I can make it.

So, goodnight for now. I'll be loving you...

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

December 24, 1944, Christmas Eve—Paris

Hello angel,

When you aren't able to share the spirit of Christmas with those you love, I guess it is just the same everywhere... in London, Paris, New York or even Asheville. Because tonight I feel just as I did on our other Christmas Eves... alone without you. I went to Confession before Mass this morning and received Communion. It brought us together as much as I could expect but I still wanted you near me so much. Tomorrow will be the same.

We worked until 11 tonight, as we will tomorrow as part of our seven-day week now, and all I wanted to do was to come home and be with you. Benny and some of the others were going to stop off somewhere and have a drink or two in an effort to capture some of the traditional Christmas Eve spirit. But, since I was fasting from midnight on, I passed it up.

Again, darling, you supplied the best Christmas presents I wanted in the form of six letters today. Four of them came back from Liege. The six were postmarked Dec. 4, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13.

I won't go into them now but will save them for tomorrow.

Tonight, I just want to think of you and love you and miss you. That will be the best Christmas Eve. And tomorrow you will be locked in my heart stronger than ever.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

December 25, 1944, Christmas morning—Jersey City

Good morning darling,

It's three a.m. but we're still up. Annice is dancing for Pop and some soldier named Joe. Bing Crosby is singing, but you aren't here and I miss you so much.

El brought out your packages early in the evening but I waited until we returned from Mass. What can I say, except that I love you so, so very much. How did you ever find the little paperweight and the music box all at one Christmas? I feel like Annice. I love them, especially the little airplane in the snow. The music box is simply super. How could I ask for more except you?

We went to St. Al's, of course, and it's the first time since we were married. I kept seeing you at the altar gate all through the Mass. I sat on the aisle. I missed you so... not having your shoulder to lean against or my hand in yours. We just belong together, you and I, not fifteen hours apart. I'm so grateful for what we've had. I'm not going to be too selfish.

Everyone else was so good to me, too. Super lovely blue jersey blouse from Father John, slip and gloves from Bette, five dollars from Pop, stockings and a sweater from El. Jane is taking me to see “A Bell for Adano” with Frederic March and Margo. I think Jane feels at home here. I wanted her to.

That’s all for now, darling. I’ll be back a bit later after I’ve had a little sleep. How I’d love to be climbing the stairs with you, to be tucked in. Here’s a special Christmas kiss... a thank you kiss too for being so nice to Mrs. K. I still have that nice big box to open for my birthday. You’re much too nice to me, but I’m not complaining. Goodnight my dearest. I’m wrinkling my nose at you with a special Merry Christmas for my sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, always, your Billee

December 25, 1944—Liege, Belgium [this must have been written ahead of time when Charles thought he would be in Liege; he was actually still in Paris]

Merry Christmas, sweetheart,

I have more than a few regrets on this, our first Christmas. They are concerned mainly with the fact that we are not together. From the time I opened my eyes this morning, wanting so much to turn my head and kiss you a “good morning, glory” until I go to sleep tonight missing you more and more, your love will be warm in my heart.

It will not do much good, but it will help for me to picture you and the tree and your gifts and the family and midnight Mass. Because, you see, I can’t be satisfied with dreams and make-believe. We belong together, not only on this day, but every day of our lives.

And, until that time comes to pass I’ll be the loneliest person in the world, next to you, darling.

Yes, today will be another Monday. I won’t have a family to be with and capture a little of Christmas. I’ll be alone this time. Not really alone, with so much of your love within me. And, I’ll be happy, too, with just the two of us.

I said there would be more than a few regrets today. Yes, but I’ll be more gratified than I ever have been before on a Christmas and when I go to the altar I’ll just thank God with all my heart for one thing... my wife!

‘Bye for a little while, Billee dearest.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

December 25, 1944—Paris

Merry Christmas, sweetheart,

That is one thing I have never been able to say to you. And, while another Christmas goes by without that hope being fulfilled, I feel, more than ever, that you know who and what is in my heart today.

Last year in London, I remember I awoke and wanted to stretch my arm and feel you close to me, to turn my head and know you were there. Today... well, maybe you only experience those moments once because they leave such an impression on your memory. No, I didn't have that terribly lonely feeling today.

I didn't have it because I no longer had to dream of your head next to mine... the cute ribbon in your hair... your warm lips when I kissed you "good morning" ... your body almost knitted to mine after you came over to "my house" when you awoke.

Those things I now I had, when my Christmas morning started today. So, I just whispered a prayer of thanksgiving to God for answering the plea I made a year ago... that He would give you to me before another year had passed. My Mass and Communion were offered in the same thanksgiving, too.

The rest of my day was spent moving a few things into the hotel room I have now and in the office, working. You may have heard from Carl that a paper comes out seven days a week now. Everybody is working seven days, until the situation at the front changes for the better. Then, we will probably work out a schedule whereby we will get a day off now and then.

I couldn't complain about the Christmas dinner, as you will be able to tell by the enclosed menu. I missed breakfast because I waited to go to 11:30 Mass.

Last night I mentioned the six letters received yesterday. They were Nos. 11, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19. Two were not numbered but I could figure from the postmarks where they belonged in the numbers. So, now I'm only missing #12, #10 and #9.

I was going to talk about the letters tonight, but with your permission, I'll put it off until tomorrow night. They were beautiful, though, Billee dearest.

Your memories, and mine, mean such a great deal. You have your own way of recalling them and I could listen for hours. Some of the things you talk of are priceless. I think I blush now when you mention those "touching the toes" and "superman" poses I staged just to see your pretty smile.



There isn't anything more beautiful to me than your face when you smile.

Your reaction to Llewellyn was one for the books, believe me.

About me not "telling all," hon... You say my letters and those Jane gets from Benny don't add up to the same thing.

My dear little woman (and I know how you hate that expression), you should know that Benny and I live in different worlds. What may seem like a major calamity to him is a triviality to me.

If he didn't bathe in four days, it's his own fault. There was hot water for me every night and morning. Yes, it has been cold here. So what? Like him, I also felt a little uneasy at first when we got back. For the present there weren't definite jobs waiting for us. We were away six and three and a half months, respectively. Others were doing the work. But, in time, everything has or will work out.

If I didn't mention those things, it was because I thought them so unimportant as to not even warrant comment.

All this is between you and me, of course. I have a very close attachment to Benny, despite his sometimes addled ways. But, what he wants to report to Jane is his business.

An item of interest from the office: Bob was relieved of his job on the desk, for the time being at least, for leaving early the other night when Goodfriend and other high brass dropped in to see how the war was going. Normally, nobody asks questions if somebody takes off early but in this case a story broke late and Bob was missing.

Les David, one of those with whom I went to Liege, was put in Bob's place. There should be new developments in a couple of days so there isn't much point going into that stuff.

And now, before I kiss you "goodnight," Mrs. Kiley, I'd like to tell you that your Christmas cards were... well, they were so like you.

You said your Christmas gift was me and I'll never, never receive one that will belong in the same world.

And to my little gifts, sweetheart, I'll just add my love. That is one thing in which I abound in wealth where you are concerned.

So, now, it's just another "goodnight, sweetheart" ... the way it has been for almost three years and will be until the end of our lives.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

December 25, 1944, Christmas night—New York

My darling,

I'm so happy and yet so miserable. You overwhelm me with your thoughtfulness. May I say I love you, oh so much, even if you weren't so very wonderful about remembering I'd love you even as

much but this way is truly wonderful. I guess I'm the luckiest girl in the world including the E.T.O. None of your brushing the fact aside. I am and I know it, and I'm so happy with it all.

I'm writing all this to the tinkle of Strauss's waltz. Do you mind? You'd think I might grow up some time what with a music box and a snowflake paperweight at my age but if you don't mind I'll stay the way I am.

Annice and I enjoyed them more than anyone... both of us on the floor playing the music box and shaking my paperweight.

Everyone liked my selections, El her pajamas, Bette her little glamour girl hair ornament made of ermine tails and velvet, Pop his warm pajamas, Annice her three dolls, Uncle John his book, Father John his film, of course, and Jane her earrings and stockings.

I was more blessed, besides the things I mentioned early in the morning.. a very glamorous nightie from Marge with a note enclosed "to be worn in that month in the cabin with a prayer that it will be soon" and she gave apartment 5L a dishpan, which we needed. Oh, and lovely red and white slippers for my birthday from Jane, slippers that I can wear.. oh, and not to mention numerous other items.

Pop and Father John brought me over tonight. Jane came over earlier and we had supper so, since it was my birthday in Paris, I decided I could open that big box that has aroused my curiosity for the last three days something awful.

I'm practically wordless. Why didn't you just wrap up the department store in pink ribbons. Oh, darling, you're just wonderful. If you were here, I'd still be perched on your knee telling you in between kisses.

You should have seen Jane and Father John leafing through the French dictionary trying to find the translation on the hankies and powder box. They are all so wonderful... the scarf will be super in our bedroom on my dressing table. It's a bit stiff to wear as a scarf. The colors are super in it. The doll is darling. It's resting on the Christmas tree. Won't our little girl be thrilled with seeing that some Christmas? The compact is just right and I actually needed one. The vase is exquisite and we'll find good use in our two-by-four. Father John decided a beautiful lamp could be made of it. The best thing of all, darling... the letter from you. How I missed that all week. The one that was to



Billee and Annice, December 1944.

accompany Christmas was mislaid somewhere between the CYO and Blessed Sacrament in Father John's room at the rectory. He's still looking. I missed so not hearing from you this week.

The best of all... I gave Father John a roll of indoor and outdoor color film. He took ten feet of the baby and fifteen feet of Jane and me beside our Christmas tree. Also, we took stills with the lights. I hope and pray they are good so you can see our Christmas.



Billee and Jane Price, with Billee's birthday gifts from Charles, December 1944. (Note the Lalique vase.)

I think they enjoyed our supper. Pop was quite taken with 5L and being able to see Seventh Avenue from the window.

I missed you most of all opening the gifts and especially when I went to bed this morning in "your room." I kept thinking of our last night. You saying your prayers with me. How unbelievable your going seemed. That was one of the worst times since you've gone. It could have been so nice, so perfect to have had you there for Christmas.

I'm glad the day is over. It wasn't easy for any of us and worst of all for you. I guess I was thinking of you every other second, wondering did you work, what you had for dinner, how lonely you were. If you and Benny were together, where you went to Mass, whether it was

midnight or this morning, did you get a box to open, what kind of a day was it... oh, a million things.

I nearly forgot: a lovely letter and card from Mrs. Frost came Sunday in the mail. I'll save it for you and get a letter off to her right away. I believe I told you about the card Jack Donnell's father sent for Theda and Jack and the letter he wrote.

My cold is much better. I think I'll go to work. Father John says I should take vitamins. Also, he's much interested in our cabin deal, and Pop would like to build it so, come spring, who knows, we may have a cabin. Father John suggested the Ramapos around the Seminary at Darlington. Are you familiar with the setting? Let me know the reaction. Also, he began talking about his 40 nieces and nephews. That's part of my disappointment in not having a child now. Do you mind?

I could go on for hours but I'd better say goodnight. It's very late at this time. I'll be back tomorrow.

You've made it a beautiful Christmas, my first as Mrs. K. but nothing can ever make up for you. It'll be Christmas every day for me when we are together again.

Here's a very special, special thank you Christmas kiss for my darling with all my love and kisses, always and forever,

Your sweetheart

PS: The girls were amazed at my ability to hold out until after midnight Mass to open your packages and especially the box from Paris. It has always been a Gray custom not to open anything 'til after midnight Christmas Eve so I'm well trained along those lines.

Once more, I love you... besides I want to be tucked in again. Do you mind? With all my love,

Mrs. K.

[Birthday note from Charles enclosed with his gifts; December 26, 1944]

Sweetheart,

I hope these few things will help bring me a little closer on another of your birthdays we will be apart.

The vase, Lalique glass, or some such word as that, is said here to be the most exquisite in the world. I wouldn't know but it was priced high enough to be exquisite.

The scarf, a little gaudy, perhaps, but it is Schiapperelli.

The hankies, compact, powder and doll... to remind us I was once in gay Paree.

Happy birthday, sweetheart.

Charles

December 26, 1944—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

I could make this an awful letter by going into detail on the "snafu" which has wrapped itself around the *Stars and Stripes*. But, none of it is worth getting all hot and bothered about, least of all when you and I cuddle up together.

Let me just say that my interest and enthusiasm for the paper is at a new low. Every time I turn around some piece of brass, from a brigadier general to a lowly captain, is trying to play little games with the paper.

Moreover, the old spirit is fast disappearing with all these new faces around. My attitude may change when and if we get to Liege and away from all this brass.

But, as it stands now my attitude today is that I'm just playing out the string until the war is over. I don't want you to feel that I'm way down in the dumps. No, I'm past the stage where I allow these things to whip me. All I care to remember, though, is that we had a good paper "once upon a time."

I have re-read your last six letters again and since you frequently mention the desire to come over here, we'll talk about that for awhile. I'm going to try and not be selfish, sweetheart, and say, "don't come!" You must have your heart set on coming and I don't want to discourage you. I realize your prime reason for wanting to come is to be together.

Trying to read your mind, I'll risk a guess and say your secondary reason is for the adventure and experience of making the trip and everything that goes with being in Europe, Paris or whatever. I'm all for being together. I want you near me terribly. I want you to have the "experience." But, as I said a week ago or so, I don't think it wise or feasible now. Perhaps, it will be a better situation since you may make the trip with Jane. To say I'm confused with it all is putting it mildly. Seriously, I don't think either of you have a chance to come over for at least a year, even if the war is over before then.

Now, another point:

If you come over, whatever we might plan for our postwar lives will have to be pushed back. I'm sure you can see how we can't do much from here. Billee, please don't let this discourage you, if your mind is made up to come. You know whatever you want is what I want. If you are determined to come, if possible, I'd be awfully disappointed if you allowed me to change your mind. In any case, please tell me of your program in that direction.

After one night in the new hotel, I had to move today. It developed that someone had reserved the room and I was to have it only for a night. I wasn't such a bargain anyway. No hot water and damned little heat. That's the usual run of hotels here, except those in which Americans and British military are billeted. Those are able to get fuel. So, I picked out a lower half of a double-decker in the GI billet and moved in. How long I'll be there, I don't know. I've been in worse places before so it's nothing I can't put up with.

Morrow and Earl went back to the front today. Almost wished I went with them. At least, I could get away from all the petty business going on here.

Benny received a letter from Joe today. He told of having a spaghetti dinner with you and how very nice both of you are. He advised us to throw away the pictures we have of you because they don't do you justice. Joe also said you'd be "perfect" if you could only cook! How come?

He told of going to the movies and "sitting on Jane's lap" which gave him the opportunity of seeing the screen for the first time in his life. Joe's column on the home front, incidentally, is going over big.

Now, let's wrinkle your nose, and give daddy a great big smile. That will make everything all right.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

PS: This stationery is getting awfully low. I'll be on typewriter paper soon.

December 26, 1944—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

Enclosed are two rosaries, both blessed by the Pope and given to me by Ralph Martin, when I met him recently here in Paris.

I want you to have one. The other is to go to Sister Gertrude Jose at St. Aloysius. Can you stop over there some night at the convent and give them to her? I'm sure she'd like to meet you.

Too, will you please send some airmail stationery... Hunt's in Macy's... via S&S envelope as soon as possible?

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

December 26, 1944—Telegrams Charles received telling him of Eddie's death

PRESS WIRELESS

PROKILEY EXLARSEN SORRIEST RELAY MESSAGE EXSPOUSE YOUR FAMILY
NOTIFED TUESDAY BROTHER ED KILLED DANSGERMANY DECEMBER ELEVENTH
STOP BILLEE VISITED FAMILY DANSJERSEY LAST NIGHT POSTRECEIVING NEWS
END = LARSEN STARSSTRIPES

LC CHARLES KILEY STARS AND STRIPES CARE PARIS HERALD PARIS

EDDIE KILLED DECEMBER 11 IN GERMANY ALL MY LOVE AND PRAYERS ARE WITH
YOU MY DARLING AGAIN I CANT BE WITH YOU

BILLEE KILEY

December 26, 1944—New York

Darling,

I wish I could write as if we didn't know any of the heart-breaking news. By the time this reaches you, you will have received the two cables.

Immediately after Father John called at 6 p.m., I called the office but everyone had left so I went out and sent the cable. I knew you would want to know as soon as possible. I left a message at Carl's hotel for him to call. He just happened to call about ten. I had left all the details with Jane before I left to go over to 195 in the event that he called so, since he was already in the office, he sent the message right through.

As usual, they are all taking it on the chin. Pop is broken up but he'll be all right. El was alone when the message came. Still seems unbelievable, darling, and you have to be alone again. Once more, I'm not of any use to you when you need me.

I called Al and told him... thought he would want to know and could stop in and see Pop. They were all at the Kenny's.

I stayed home again today. Good thing, too, else it would have been late tonight before I got the message because this was our class night. Jane went so she'll brief me tomorrow night on the lesson tonight. To top everything off we heard the news that Paris is being bombed.

Darling, darling... if only for five minutes I could be with you tonight. There aren't any words... just that more than ever I'm with you. All my prayers and love are so close to you. I love you so very much.

As soon as Pop receives the letter confirming the wire, he's going to have a Mass for Eddie. May I just say I'm awfully glad I'm a Kiley?

I'll say goodnight with a prayer to comfort you some way. Keep well and remember I love you so much.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

December 28, 1944—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

I'm much better today, especially since two of your letters arrived... Nos. 19 and 21. Seems like all of a sudden people started to realize I wasn't home anymore, too.

There were Christmas cards from the Doyles, Kennys, Carlsons in Elyria, Eleanor Scott, a letter from Lee and Harry, a card from the Roches, one from Jane, and a letter from Joe Fleming. I also received a message from Andy telling me he expected to see his and Bud's agent about the "Molotoff" deal.

Most of all, though, I needed those letters from you. I've been keeping busy trying not to think too much and to feel all the world's hard luck is coming our way.

I went out to do a story on two fellows who just came out of the line after being caught in the counter-offensive for nine days. It made me feel lots better.

Darling, in one of the letters you stated your side of the story on coming over... when and if. As I've said before, I'm all for it if you are and let me hear of anything you learn about it.

One thing I am concerned with is your inability to sleep at night. That's not good, Mrs. K. Evidently, you have things on your mind... worrisome things.

If it will help any, I'll say this once more. No matter what I do or where I go, there won't be the slightest possibility of me getting "hit on the head." If I have to sacrifice anything and everything... that comes first.

My chief responsibility, as I see it now, lies with you and only you. If the story of the war depends on it, I wouldn't risk a scratch. Perhaps, my conscience will bother me, but I couldn't care less.

So, don't worry, and rest assured your pappy is going to be all right. More than ever before our separation is hard to take, but I know we'll be able to make up for it.

'Bye for a little while.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

PS: Earl's wife, I believe, is going to write to you and ask you for aid in preparing Earl's homecoming. Also, the wife of one of the fellows here, Paul Horowitz, asked for the addresses of the S&S wives, so if she calls you, you'll know what it's all about. Until I can get stationery, hon, my letters will have to be typewritten from now on. This is the last of what I have.

Goodnight. C.

December 29, 1944—Paris

Dear Ray,

Before I even start this letter, I somehow feel I am not going to do a very good job with this.

I received word, from Billee and Carl Larsen, one of our guys in New York, about Eddie, two days ago. I don't know... maybe I should have been bowled over. I wasn't. That is, it was a painless shock but it was as if it happened last month or last year and somebody was telling me something I already knew.

I can go back to June when I received a letter from Eddie saying he thought he was on his way to France pretty quick. I remember, before I finished the letter, something came over me to make me feel he was never going to get through. I can't say why I put the finger on him, more than any of the other thousands. But I did, and I told Earl Mazo I had the feeling something was going to happen to him. Coincidentally, Earl was with me when the message came the other day from Billee.

It may have been that I had seen fellows dead and dying in Normandy before I got that letter from Ed. But there it was.

Yesterday, it all started to sink in and I couldn't keep my mind on anything. Always it was some thought in connection with him. Today it isn't so bad. All I know is that I'm so fed up, sick, sore and disgusted with anything with a war angle to it I can hardly sit still.

I try to think of the couple of hundred thousand other kids who went the same way all over the world. It doesn't do much good. But, while I'm telling you this, you may be feeling the same way.

I know remorse doesn't do much good so I've tried to get closer to him by going to Mass and communion every morning. I have been all week, since Sunday.

Naturally you think of the future when things like this happen and I worried about Pop. He will be hit worse than any of us, I know. Let me know how he takes it and don't spare anything, please, Ray.

K.

December 31, 1944—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

It is only 10 p.m. (5 p.m. your time) but I'm going to do the customary thing and wish you a "beautiful, blessed, happiest New Year."

I feel 100 percent better than I did when my last letter was written two nights ago. A lot of the first impression shock is gone now. Your message about the Mass for Eddie came yesterday and I'll be at Mass and Communion on Tuesday morning.

Letter No. 27 also arrived yesterday and, honey, there are quite a few in between yet to come. I have a little chart and those missing are Nos. 9, 10, 14, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26. So you see, I have a lot to look forward to.

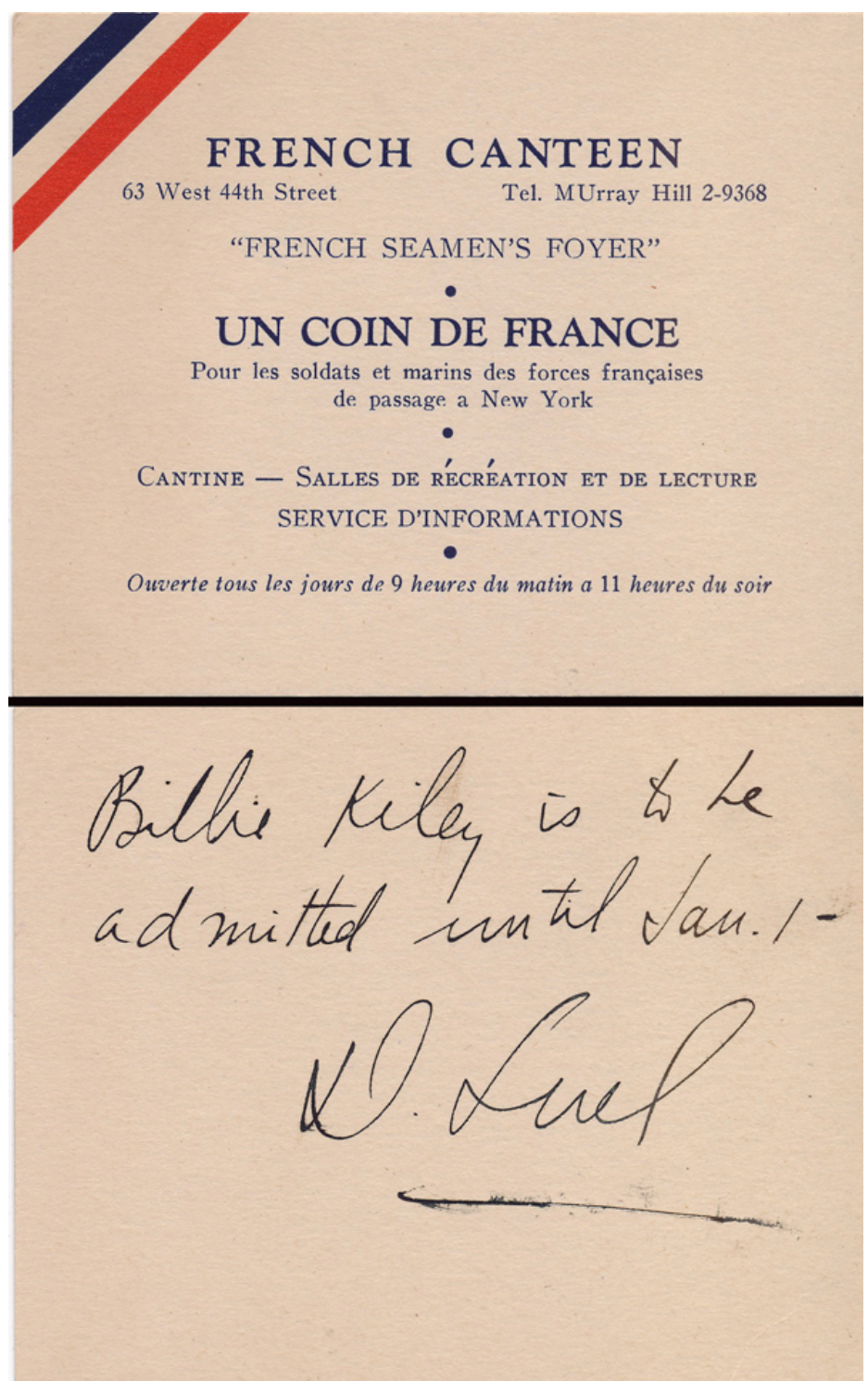
Judging by your letter, my mail has been slow. The lull may be due to my trips in Liege. I hope that's all it is.

I liked your job as hostess in the French canteen. No, I don't mind, sweetheart. I'm just pleased you have something to do and enjoy. How about writing me a letter in French and see how I do with it?

A Christmas card came today from John R. Esaias in Danville, Pa. If you tell me who he is, I'll write to him. I'd hate like the devil to call him "uncle" and find out he's a nephew or something.

Normally, I'd probably be in the mood for a little hi-jinks (without misbehaving, mind you) tonight, but in view of recent developments, I'll skip them this year. Benny has prevailed upon me to at least see the New Year in with him and a couple of the other boys. I agreed but I'll be "in the crib" shortly after midnight. I couldn't enjoy myself if I wanted to for awhile yet. When your midnight strikes it will be 5:00 a.m. and I'll be dreaming of you.

Now, a word about our "old year." Billee, it was a year of fulfillment and complete happiness for me. Eddie's death, of course, took a lot of the edge from it. But, if we are as happy for the rest of our lives as we were



Billee's letter telling about working at the French canteen has not been found.

this year, we won't have any room to complain, will we?

There are so many things I'll always remember about 1944 and you are most of them, Mrs. Kiley. I still consider myself the most fortunate and happiest man in the world.

Tonight, I'm thinking too of something we haven't talked about in ever so long.. our ball team.

Your words, "I'll be terribly disappointed," are still in my mind. While I haven't said anything about it, I haven't forgotten. I'm wondering, sweetheart, if you still are disappointed. Like I said then, God will take care of it.

My prayers these days as always are that He blesses us with "our team" but, if it isn't sacrilegious, He can't say we didn't try. The New Year may, I hope and pray, see us really together and with the pitcher, perhaps, "warming up."

Again, angel, I miss you so much and love you so much more.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

January 1, 1945, New Years Morning—Jersey City

My darling,

Happy New Year, my darling, with a prayer that it will find us together very soon. It finds me loving you all the more.

It's been an exciting New Year's Eve, darling, spent in the kitchen playing Monopoly with Betsy and El. I think all together we've had three rye and sodas and in the course of the evening I baked a cake and experimented with some boiled chocolate icing—turned out not too bad. Pop said the cake was good. He had a piece before it was iced.

Uncle John is here and is staying over 'til tomorrow as I am. Pop went out with the Emersons—which was good. Better than him sitting around. Bette is spending a night at a girlfriends. Jane, I told you, went to the Notleys.

After that book I wrote last night [letter missing], I hope you don't feel disgusted with me at the strong language I used about the *Stars and Stripes* but you would have been a bit irked yourself, I'm sure.

Speaking of the S&S, I read the *Stars and Stripes* edition with Andy's first column. It's priceless. I'm surprised they would publish it. It brought back the picture of you leaving again. That Monday morning... I couldn't believe it and yet I knew, and I loved you so.

I'd love having a letter. You know I haven't had an "I love you" since December 7. Maybe you've changed your mind. Please let's not think about it.

El hasn't received any more word from Tom since the call two weeks ago. I should complain. At least I know you're safe and well and where you are.

Father John is due to come over tomorrow for dinner. I haven't talked to him since the night he called me.

I've thought about you so tonight. Wondered what you were doing... working I suppose.

By the way, my man-about-town... a Christmas card came from a St. Sgt. Joy Dunlap with a war serial number and the same A.P.O. as yours. I'm fairly seething with jealousy. Maybe she doesn't know you're back, I hope, or perhaps I could drop her a line and thank her for her card. Signing it Mrs. K. I'm thinking I should have sent the rest of those announcements to the WAC detachment over there.

Also we have a card from the Schwartzs and a Lt. Victor Brussonansky in Seattle. You know the most amazing people, darling. When did you happen on him?

I shall send the cards on request... ok?

I'm remembering so many things tonight. They all come crowding to my mind: all the glorious days and nights and all our starry moments. It can't be long now 'til we can be Mr. & Mrs. K. again. I'll not let you out of my sight, that I know, so prepare yourself, and I'll be saying "make with the lip" more times than you'll be able to count. Do you mind?

I'm afraid you're stuck with Mrs. K. for a long, long time. I love you, oh, so much. My Mass and Communion tomorrow will be for us, darling.

I'm ready to be tucked in but I'll wait 'til you say your prayers. Goodnight, my darling.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

January 1, 1945—Jersey City

My dearest,

It's been a quiet day but I'm glad, because I could be with you so much better.

I'm still at 195. Decided not to go back since I'd have to turn around and come back in the morning for the Mass.

El and I chatted upstairs in bed before we finally said goodnight this morning, spinning dreams as usual.

Uncle John is still staying and he and Pop just went around the corner. You know darling, it's such a good feeling to belong to 195, more than you know. Some evening when we have nothing better to talk about I'll tell you a story about why being a part of all this means so much to me.

Father John came in for dinner and tussled with the baby all afternoon. I think he was more exhausted than Annice. She is so cute, and saying so many things. You'd laugh if you could see him teaching her discipline and she tells him to "hit the road."

He's having trouble with his kids. A gang of Italian boys have been ganging up on his kids. It has become quite a problem. They are regular thugs.



CORP. EDWARD T. KILEY

Corp. Kiley Killed in Action In Germany

Solemn requiem mass will be celebrated Tuesday for Corp. Edward T. Kiley at St. Aloysius Roman Catholic Church. The priest who will say mass for the young Jersey City soldier is Corp. Kiley's brother, Rev. John Kiley of the Blessed Sacrament Church, of Newark.

Notification of Corp. Kiley's death in action in Germany on Dec. 11, was received by his father, Charles F. Kiley, Sr., of 195 Lexington Av., yesterday. The news came as a deep shock to the older Kiley, for his youngest son, who would have been 25 in January, had previously been wounded in France, but had returned to his armored unit after a short hospitalization period, during which he received the Purple Heart Order. The date of his first wound was Sept. 20.

Corp. Kiley was the brother of Staff Sgt. Charles F. Kiley, Jr., a former writer of The Jersey Journal staff, now serving with the Paris office of The Stars and Stripes, the U. S. Army newspaper.

A native of Jersey City, Corp. Kiley attended St. Aloysius grammar and high schools, and was employed by the Pennsylvania Railroad before entering the service in March, 1942. He received his training at Camp Cooke, Cal.; Camp Forrest, Tenn., and Pine Camp, N. Y.

MOTHER DIED IN 1943

While he was in training in California, his mother, Mrs. Ella N. Kiley, died on Feb. 2, 1943, and Corp. Kiley was given a special furlough to attend the funeral, at which his brother, Rev. John Kiley, also celebrated the requiem mass.

In January, 1944, Corp. Kiley and his unit went to England, preparatory to the invasion of France. Shortly before D-Day, he and Sgt. Charles Kiley, who was then stationed with the Stars and Stripes office in London, managed to hold a reunion. It was the last time the brothers saw each other, for shortly afterward, Corp. Kiley's unit participated in the invasion of Normandy, while Sgt. Kiley was given a two-month assignment by the Stars and Stripes in New York. During his stay at home Sgt. Kiley married the former Miss Billie Gray of New York.

Surviving Corp. Kiley, besides his father and two brothers, are also two sisters, Mrs. Thomas O'Connor and Miss Elizabeth J. Kiley, both of Jersey City.

It was an awful day out, all rain all day long.

El showed me your most recent V-letter, December 15, telling about hearing from Eddie. They didn't show Pop that or the Christmas cards that came.

Father John said two girls came in after Mass. One had dated Eddie before he went over and her brother is in the same outfit. She had a letter this week from her brother telling that Eddie was back with the old outfit again. She is writing the brother to see if he knows any details.

The insurance policies all came out. The ones are here that you made out to your Mom. Will you need them to make the change or will they be automatically cancelled? Pop wants to turn the insurance policies over to us now or after the war. The premiums are about \$37.00 a year. There are five all together. I imagine they amount to about \$1500. I don't want us to get insurance-poor. If you carried the government policy, the premiums amount to a sizable amount on that. What I carry amounts to \$112.00 a year. You can kind of figure from these what we should do.

Uncle John just asked to be remembered to you. He looks much better than before.

Jane didn't come back from the Notley's 'til late, then she called me. I don't like leaving her alone but I'm sure she's all right.

I have two whole cartons of cigarettes to send you. Father John had about fifteen cartons given to him for Christmas. These two are Chesterfields and they are all sealed in waxed paper. Some fellow in the Navy gave them to him.

Also, I paid him the \$100 back. He was almost insulted, said that was a long term loan that he didn't expect back. I want us to have a clean sheet to start when you come back. I owed a little money but I'm getting it paid. I didn't want to spoil any of our fun with worrying about finances. Time enough for that after. Anyway, we start clean when we start as Mr. & Mrs. K. again. I thought, of course, that I'd be back home again in the two months and I could handle everything but, thank goodness, things didn't work out like that. Instead, we had over another month, nearly two extra ones.

I'll send you the clipping from the paper in tomorrow's letter.

You know, darling, what I remembered today? Your little striptease number. You were so funny and the last thing I ever expected from you but I was so glad you did so many little unexpected things that surprised and delighted me. They made me love you all the more, if that's possible.

El washed tonight and I ironed. Exciting but we both wanted something to

do. I ironed some of Pop's shirts. I hope he approves. I hear he's quite an expert himself.

The cake turned out swell, the biggest one I ever made. Little Bette was delighted. She said if I'd put it in a box you'd think it came from the bakery.

Darling, I'd love to be sitting in the other room with your head in my lap, watching you sleep.

Tuck me in good, and kiss me goodnight. Goodnight, my dearest.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

January 2, 1945—Paris

Hello Sweetheart,

You are in for some severe punishment until I get better stationery than this. Furthermore, there isn't a typewriter in the place that isn't damaged in one way or another. But, it's this or not at all, and I just can't picture myself staying away for any length of time.

Another letter today, angel. Number 25, written on Dec. 18, anniversary of Jane and Benny [this letter is missing]. You weren't feeling so good that day. That is, not until you put away one of those dynamite-packed Manhattans a la Price. It also was the night after you dreamed of winning \$300. What's the recipe for a dream like that? Maybe I can stretch it out long enough to get my hands on the money before I wake up. I got paid today... all of \$54, I think. It's hard to tell when you get it in francs. At any rate, payday makes me feel as though I were back in the Pfc days.

Strange, darling. Only the other night, in my last letter, I mentioned our "ball team." And, in yours, which came today you dwelled a bit on the same subject. You talked about our "years to come with all of our children around us," and that you weren't in a position to boast at the rate you were going. You said you were disappointed in a way... but not in such a way that I'll have to worry.

My dear little glamour-puss. As I see it, this father-and-mother department is definitely a two-way proposition and do you mind if I do a little of the worrying? No, do you mind?

Seriously, hon, I'm not worrying except that I want you to be so happy. I don't want a single thing missing from all those you've dreamed about. So, don't fret, Mrs. K., we'll be doing all right one of these days.

Now, a word about the situation here.

The war has swung again in our favor, even though it isn't much to brag about. Patton has counter-attacked in two places and has won back one-third of the Bulge lost to the German counter-offensive. At least, the war is pushing forward again instead of coming back at us.

Just now, I'm doing several jobs and keeping busy at them all. One day a week, I cover the war and write the lead story. Another day, I do the "outside war" pieces on Pacific, Russia, Italy, etc. Then I work on sports and make up a couple of pages on the other days. By "make up" I don't mean I daub powder and lipstick on the pages, either.

During the last week, our end of *Stars and Stripes* has taken over three editions in Marseilles, Dijon and Strasbourg, which were operated by men who came up from Italy with the 7th Army on the invasion of southern France. Too, we're still planning to open a new one in Liege. With all that, there will be a distribution of personnel to all editions. I seriously doubt if I'll leave Paris for awhile and IF I do it will be to Liege, the best deal of all.

What I have to say next... I don't want you to take even the least bit seriously. It all is in the "discussion" stage and I'm not even thinking about it. When and if something concrete develops I'll let you know.

It's this: Maj. Goodfriend, the new boss who succeeded Llewellyn, proposes to send two men to the Pacific and to Russia. Hutton has been ticketed for the Pacific, when and if.. and guess who for Russia? Yes, me.

Now, don't get excited. Like I said, it's just being talked about. It may be just that... a lot of talk. But if something does break on it, it will be the best opportunity I could have dreamed for. The possibilities are tremendous. Russia has never allowed a civilian correspondent NEAR the front. Our proposition is to get a soldier there to tell our GIs what it's like in the Russian army. A sort of hands-across-the-world-to-our-gallant-Allies setup.

Personally, I don't see even the slightest danger to the job if it develops. Be sure, I won't stick my neck out any further than 500 miles from the front. Just take my word for it, the job would be colossal.

But, the sad lament is that I'm almost sure something will happen to stop it. Russia won't OK it, U.S. won't okay it, or somebody won't. Let's hear what you think?

And, be a good girl with no misbehaving? I kind of like that even though I can see that halo 'round your pretty head.

'Night, sweetheart... I love you and miss you more and more and more and more.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

January 3, 1945—New York

My darling,

The mail is so "snafued" I don't know whether I'm coming or going since Friday when I received my first letter in two weeks which was dated Dec. 7. Now I have one (via *Stars and Stripes*) dated the 16th, besides two others via air mail dated Dec. 23 and 26, so you can see how I'm a little mixed.

You talk about things in previous letters that I haven't received. Your letter of the 16th received today mentions the Molatoff deal. The details must be in a previous letter. I couldn't get any satisfaction out of Andy. He sent the wire to Slesinger while he was in California. I asked him several times if he'd heard anything and he said Slesinger hadn't contacted him. However, tomorrow I will call Farrar and Rinehart and see if I can contact him through them and if I can obtain any information.

I tried to contact Father John tonight but no luck, but I'll contact him tomorrow. I could have been working on it but Father John, I know, hasn't received your letter as far as I know, else he would have told me. This is the first information I've had other than the "nice mention" through Andy. I sincerely hope something does work out of it. We'll see what happens now that Mrs. K. is getting on the ball.

Darling, I'm as unhappy as you about the situation over there. Not having all the details but a general idea of what goes on, I know how you must feel. Somehow, when you left I had a strange feeling that you wouldn't find the old spirit prevailing. I talked to Jane about it but hoping that I was wrong because that spirit is so necessary to be happy in what you're doing.

That is why I mentioned in a former letter that I would rather have you in the field and happy than safe and unhappy, but that's up to you. You know what you should and should not do, so I'll leave that up to your good judgment.

Carl was telling me tonight when I went up to pick up your two welcome letters that Bob had been farmed out to Strasbourg and that Bud had gone to the field, according to the cable received a few minutes before my arrival. That's a shame because I liked him but the organization is probably too big and too brassy for him to have much authority and he's the type that would rather not play along with them. Perhaps if you go to Liege it will be different. At least the organization will be smaller.

I haven't received the "les miserables" but darling if it's any lower than these I've received... well. I'm really anxious about you. You must be lower than low after receiving last week's bad news. Oh, and I want so to comfort you in some way. It isn't very satisfying I know but perhaps a little comfort that I have been with you nearly constantly as close as I can, darling, and I love you so much and want so to be near at hand. You're right: dreams and make-believe aren't very satisfying. More than ever we belong together, every single day forever and ever. Even now, I'm resenting those few days in St. Louis away from me. Is that silly? But I do.

I'm sorry Joe didn't like my cooking. It was spaghetti, just as I made for the four of us. Andy ate all his. Mrs. Rooney picked, as usual. After hearing about Joe's appetite, I didn't expect to satisfy him. I told him the other night to come back after his trip to see Margaret and I'd have a baked potato for him. I can't get over him telling Benny that we went to the movies because we didn't. It was mentioned that evening but Andy felt more like sprawling on our rug.

Bucknell is working in the office and Carl and Graf are simply amazed that he comes in at 8:00 a.m. as you and Benny did. It seems their hours begin about 8:45. I'm afraid Bucknell is the last of the old spirit around here. Andy comes up with announcements that should be made about the cable service, that they can't be bothered with calling all the time to deliver messages. This all came on top of my using the service for the two urgent messages concerning Eddie that I sent you. I'm almost sorry I asked them now. From now on, I'll use the commercial service since we know Benny received Jane's message. You probably received the one I sent.

The Rooneys are off on a two-week trip just as Llewellyn is due to arrive, leaving them without a secretary. Carl called to ask if I was quitting my job yet, if so would I take Mrs. Rooney's place for the two weeks she will be away. I said no, that I wasn't ready to quit, not for two weeks, anyway. Fact

is, love, I'm a little fed up with the *Stars and Stripes* here and over there, for the way they are making you feel. Let's not talk about them any more.

Oh, enclosed is a card from the Dears that was enclosed in a box of Lofts candy. By the time I got it, it was a couple of weeks old. I forgot it twice at 195 and I figured with the mails so slow that it would be awfully stale so I gave some to 195 and we still have some here. You'd better write a "thank you" note. We are enjoying it lots. I'll send more to you that will stay more fresh, ok?

Your Christmas letter received along with the Dec. 16 one from the *Stars and Stripes* made me cry. I stopped in St. Agnes to read them because I knew I couldn't wait to get home, and I had to stay a few minutes at the Ritz-Carlton to see some girls from the office at the Time cocktail party. I only stayed an hour then dashed home.

I'm glad you saved the cards and that they arrived in time. I was hoping you'd get one of the boxes, especially the one that has our Christmas package. The wallet was another but I couldn't wrap it, according to Andy, and I didn't feel like enclosing a note that they might read or something. I knew the three pennies would tell you it was from me.

You will have my holiday letter now and know how terribly lonely I was. Won't it be wonderful just to wake each other up in the morning? Such a simple little thing to have you biting my ear and making little shivers inside me. Such a lovely way to wake up. You know, hon, on more than one occasion I awakened you ten minutes early just so I could snuggle on your side. That hussy you have for a wife!

I've never stopped saying "thank you" for you, my darling, since the day we knelt together and Father John made us Mr. & Mrs. Kiley. Sometimes just that alone frightens me, it's so big. I want so much to be everything you want.

Please, don't let the *Stars and Stripes* get you down. You know I've never had any letters like these from you before, but I know you are sharing the good and the not so good with me and that makes me very happy inside because I want to be a part of everything, just as I am making you a part of everything now. Please don't stop telling me... ever.

I'll be back tomorrow with more. Now I'm ready to be tucked in, and to snuggle up so my tootsies will get warm. I love you so much, my dearest, so very much.

All my love and kisses, always your sweetheart, Billee

January 5, 1945—Paris

Hello Sweetheart,

Received your Christmas letter a moment ago and with a half hour before dinner I'll stop in for a few minutes.

Glad you liked the Christmas "presents," if you can call them that, hon. I should have made the birthday gifts for Christmas and the paperweight and music box for your birthday. I have a confession to make, too. I bought the weight on the way home from the hospital in North Arlington.

Remember the night we stopped and Dot said the shop had good Christmas cards? Well, she also told me I could get the weight there. I previously had asked her if there was a place in N.A. where I could get one. The music box was my idea but John bought it. At least, I left the money with him and asked him to get one for you. The day I shopped in Macy's I tried to find one in several stores but couldn't. I spent another afternoon trying, without luck. So, I tossed it in John's lap the last time I saw him. I also gave him the weight to wrap and give to you on the 25th.

Now, I have a couple of complaints. Gosh, we have to fuss about something, don't we? After all, we're old married people now.

You failed to mark the numbers on some of your letters... I suppose I have, too. But I'm still trying to keep track of yours. I still haven't received Nos. 9, 10, 14, 22, 23, 24 and 26. In one of them, I hope you acknowledged the \$100 money order I sent shortly after I reached Paris. If you haven't received it by the time this reaches you let me know. I know I haven't got the receipt (lost it) but at least I'll be able to kick myself in the bloomers for being such a dope.

The second complaint is that your "bits of heaven" are awfully short in comparison to what they were when you were Miss Gray, ma cherie. Now, don't get me wrong. I know you are writing a little something almost every day but I can read them in 2 minutes. I can just see your lips tightening and that fire coming in your eyes but, like I said, we have to fuss about something and that's about all I can think of to get you het up. Moreover, I'd like to know what went on the night of Dec. 23? Just check back in your memory and give me a report, if you haven't done so in a previous letter.

The Russia deal was okayed by Gen. Solbert, our immediate boss in Paris and he's taking it up with Ambassador Winant and/or the Russian Embassy in London when he pays it a visit in a couple of days. Bud's Pacific trip also has been okayed and he will probably leave within a few weeks, as I see it. Maybe a little longer but not much.

I'll be back tonight or tomorrow morning, angel. Be a good girl and... going back to the last sentence of the fourth paragraph here... NO MISBEHAVIN'!!! I get reports from the N.Y. Bureau, you know.

'Bye for a little.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

January 5, 1945—New York

My darling,

Do you mind if we just shut out all the world and just be together for tonight?

It's very late. Jane has been asleep quite awhile. I just finished showering and getting all glamorous for you. Haven't even rolled my hair up. It's a bit damp from the shower.

I'm curled up in the dressing room with your picture. My feet are stretched out on the other chair and oh, to make the picture complete, I'm decked out in your freshly laundered pajamas and my, or shall I say, "our," *Heure Intime*.

I've had lots of mail this week. The most cheerful was the one telling of the Folies Bergere. The program arrived today with your little footnote. Thought you said it wasn't burlesque? Did Mme. Gizzy ever put any clothes on? Just curious. I'm glad they offered you an evening of enjoyment especially after finding everything else so unpleasant (more about that later).

Before I forget, darling... please, you didn't understand. There is only one reason I want to be in Paris if it's possible and that's to be as close to you as I can get. Any adventure, intrigue or whatever that might be over there leaves me cold, except maybe the adventure of being with you. That doesn't leave me cold. I have absolutely no desire to go over except to be with you. Do I make myself clear?

The news makes everything look awfully discouraging together, with what you told me is going on behind the scenes. The thought occurred that perhaps that is a big factor in their being able to push us back. Tonight, darling, I'd make a good isolationist. We liberate them and what happens? We might just as well have left them to the Germans. That's pretty strong. Surely, some good must come of it all.

Larsen seems to be screwing up the cables somehow. I should say Carl. I really do call him that and a few other names under my breath. He told us all about your days off. I'd better set you straight on our social activities with the *Stars and Stripes* since your departure.

1. Carl to dinner the week after and he went to the Ice Follies with us.
2. Andy, Marg, Carl, Jane and I had dinner at the Brevoort.
3. Joe, Andy and Marg, dinner at our apartment.
4. Dinner with Llewellyn and the other wives.
5. The *Stars and Stripes* gathering here a week ago.

I seem to remember having been mentioned casually over the phone but nothing definite. I don't get it. They're trying to give the impression of wining and dining us all the time. Frankly, I couldn't care less if they never bothered. They

are like a bunch of gossiping hens up there trying to live everyone's life. The latest is that Bob never should have been permitted home. He should have been sent to a rest camp.

How the heck did we get started on this deal? I wanted to be with you.



HOTEL BREVOORT, Fifth Avenue and Eighth Street, New York

The Brevoort Hotel was a fixture on lower Fifth Avenue in Manhattan for 100 years, from 1854 to 1954, and was only a short walk from Billee's apartment.

In my letter tomorrow, I'll tell you of my visit to Slesinger. I wanted to write last night but Marguerite stayed over with us after a shopping tour.

From Benny's letters, he feels pretty much the same way you do so I read part of the "les miserables" to Jane. I thought I should. Benny is all ready to figure out a way to come back even if it means losing his rating.

You haven't mentioned him much in your letters, so I am assuming you aren't spending much time together. According to his letters, all he does is work, which probably is just as well.

Back to us. While I was ironing tonight, I came across the hanky I remember carrying the night I met you. I always used it with that dress. I was remembering our first kiss, darling, and how wonderful you were. It seems like an awfully long time ago, doesn't it, but still it's very vivid in my memory, as vivid as our recent months together. It's amazing how we found each other and hung on so to what we had found. Darling, to say I miss you is such an understatement. Honestly, hon, I don't think five minutes go by that you aren't there in my thoughts. How do you do it? So many little things bring everything back. But I want it that way. I want to be with you as much as possible. Truly, darling, we have something people live a lifetime for and never find.



Katherine Mary Dunham (1909–2006) was an American dancer, choreographer, author, educator, and social activist. Dunham had one of the most successful dance careers in American and European theater of the 20th century, and directed her own dance company for many years.

Golly, how I'd love snuggling up to you with my head tucked under your chin... so close to you.

Your letters mean so much, darling. They are my very existence now. Please just go on telling me the good and bad and how you miss me.

Jane and I went to see the Katherine Dunham revue... all colored, and not exactly burlesque since they wore quite a few clothes but here and there, the dances were pretty torrid. That was my birthday present... nice, wasn't it? We both enjoyed it. Seeing the theatre crowd, etc., but it would have been real fun seeing it with you.

It gets later and later and I should let you tuck me in, in my own house, and go to sleep but I'd like to stay a bit longer, darling. I love you, oh so much. Almost scares me. I guess you'd better give me a shove to get me started. Tuck me in and don't forget three times. I love you.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your sweetheart

January 6, 1945—Long Island

My darling,

What a wonderful day. Three lovely letters, the second [December] 23rd one, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. So much more than I hoped for. Incidentally I'm simply glowing from your letters... I l since Tuesday. Do you mind if I whisper "I love you" to you just once here? You're awfully nice, Mr. K., so wonderful.

We are in a new setting, a long way out on Long Island with El, at Tom's mother's. I'm spending the weekend. Jane's friend, Brad, is staying with her tonight. I won't leave her alone for a night again. Tuesday night when I stayed over at "195," she sat up nearly all night and read to keep herself awake, she was so uneasy. I had no idea she would be that way, else I never would have stayed over. I guess there's something wrong. I have no fear about staying alone or going alone. I came out here alone tonight and found the place. It involved the subway, bus and a four-block walk.

I went to dinner with Jane's Brad at the Spanish place. Jane fixed us two Manhattans from Benny's recipe and we had another at the restaurant. By that time, I didn't know whether I was eating Spanish or Chinese food, but I managed. They left me at the apartment to dress and went to a movie.

I'm going to have to get another job, hon. This will last the rest of this month, so tomorrow I'm going job hunting. Mrs. O'Connor is going to inquire at the Federal Reserve where she works, in the Wall Street district. The salary is pretty nice and the hours better. Also, I've heard of an opening at British Broadcasting that pays pretty well. I'd like something interesting and different. I'm not taking the first offer because I want this to be permanent, so we'll see.

We remember so many things the same way, darling. Waking up and having you get me nice and warm before we get up. You must know how I miss seeing your head on the other pillow. You sleep so nice, darling, so quiet. I used to wake up and just watch you, almost hating to waken you. You always succeeded, darling, in making me smile. I loved your "duties." I always hoped you'd be like that. We'd have pillow fights and tussles. I guess I haven't given up yet. Do you mind, darling? My favorite is your "striptease." I'll never forget your peeping out of the robe at me... never. It's a wonder we weren't thrown out of 309 for our "wild nights." The night you turned the cold shower on me. I could have cheerfully crowned you with something or other. It was all such a beautiful time.

Tomorrow night I'm going to read all of your letters carefully again to see if I missed anything before I write. I thought surely some of the packages had arrived by now, especially for Christmas. I wanted you to have something to open but I'm happy the cards and letters arrived. Next Christmas, I shall do me all up in nice bright wrappings and red ribbon and present myself properly to you, Mr. K. Oh, you are with me so much these days.

I wasn't able to receive Communion. I had been so down and out with the cold. I thought I could go at St. Al's but when I called El that Saturday, she said no, so Jane and I dashed around the corner to the Spanish Church but were too late so we didn't get to go. I was so disappointed because I knew

you'd be there at the altar rail waiting for me. I ended the year right, though, and started out right... then again for First Friday.

El heard from Tom today and feels so much better, I know. He's in Greenland and spent Christmas Eve and Day in Labrador. I'm glad for her because it has been a strain. Also, 195 had your first letter today since the news of Eddie was received (since you received the news is what I mean).

I haven't told you about the Mass. It was beautiful, darling. Father John said it, of course, and was assisted by Father _____ and Father Eddie. There were 25 priests on the altar, and four monsignors. Still, darling, it seems unbelievable. After getting your letters and knowing how things are over there, I've been so anxious to know about how you are. I've been as close to you, darling, as close as I could get... trying to comfort you in some way. I hope I have succeeded. Just a little will help.

El is ready to turn in, so I'll let you tuck me in. I'm awfully weary and would love to snuggle on your shoulder for a bit and have you kiss me three times (still no explanation yet). Goodnight, my darling. I love you oh, so much.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your sweetheart

PS: Thought you would want to read the enclosure[?]. Ray handled it for El. He attended the Mass, too, which I thought was swell of him to do. We chatted a little while. There was quite a large crowd there, and quite a few asked for you and wanted to be remembered. Mr. & Mrs. McGee, Irene and Jack, Margaret Smith... they all came to the house after. Uncle John stayed over through Tuesday.

Guess that's all. I love you.

January 7, 1945—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

Gosh, it didn't take long to get results. Only the other night I "complained" that your letters were getting rather brief. So, yesterday you came through with a long one and now three more today. Forgive me, angel, forgive me. Not only for that, but for this continued writing with the Underwood. I certainly hope my stationery gets through one of these days. The letters, which came yesterday and today were Nos. 24, 26, 28 and 30... the last two of which were written Christmas morning and Christmas night.

The situation here remains normal... Russia is still hanging fire and I haven't heard anything since Gen. Solbert went to London to see someone in the Russian Embassy. Meanwhile, I may go to Liege for a few days, return to Paris, and then maybe go up there to work on the desk until the Russian deal develops. Liege is out of danger now so don't worry. You sounded awfully concerned in one of your letters, after Larsen told you I'd gone up there. And, I can imagine your anxiety but it wasn't nearly as bad as the picture was painted. In fact, there never was any real threat to Liege at all, except a few buzz bombs flying over. Just remember, I know where it's safe and where it isn't and even if you hear "accurate" reports, believe me, I'll be anywhere but in danger if something happens.

Your December anniversary letter was lovely, Billee. Like you I'm always thinking back to our moments and the little things that didn't seem so important then. I haven't received any word from Andy about "Molotoff" mainly because N.Y. [*Stars and Stripes* N.Y. office] says he is on a trip to Maryland and Kentucky. I hope he remembers to check with Slesinger when he gets back. Word from Larsen today told about Meg Hanson working in the office and that he and Andy will return in a couple of weeks.

Hon, you don't have to send me any more cigarettes for awhile. I'll let you know when I'm running out. The five packs we get each week are plenty for now. That stationery is the thing that is worrying me. You also mentioned fur-lined gloves on the way. I haven't received them but sure could use them. I'm also concerned about the \$100 I sent to you.

I would have given anything to be with you on Christmas, angel. Your tree must have been wonderful. And, I would have loved to see you opening your gifts. You mentioned a future Christmas in Asheville. I'd like to spend our first Christmas together there, if you would like it. As you must know by now I'd given anything to have it for our own... the house, I mean. Whenever Mom spoke of selling it, I got dizzy. If I had the wherewithal now I know I'd try to buy it if she wanted to let it go. If I was ever in love with a house, that's it. Jealous?

You don't have to send any cough syrup. I've been lucky and so far have avoided anything but a minor snuffle now and then. My hands are OK, too.

That cabin in the Ramapos, as suggested by John, sounds okay if we can get one but I've never heard of anything up there. He should know after being up that way for five years. I'd like it. If you can do anything about it go to it, but remember I don't want a bungalow or stuff like that. I want at least a sound log frame or something like that... with a fireplace. A big one.

Benny moved out of the office, a room in which he had been using for a bedroom, over to our billets. He moved in with Bill Spear and me last night, and immediately wondered why he didn't do it before. It's no palace but there is hot water and heat. The bunks aren't so bad. I've slept in worse, although not much worse. You and I would make an awfully close pair shackled up in one of these bunks.

Your recall of the night I came back from the Series and how you jumped into bed with a casual "goodnight" made me smile, too, sweetheart. Man alive! Do you know... if you suddenly dropped into Paris now and pulled something like that I'd get arrested for murder, so help me.

But I'm loving you and ever missing you, Mrs. K. I don't get into restless and fretful moods like I used to but I'm always longing for those days when there is no separation.

'Bye for awhile... 'Night.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

January 7, 1945—New York

My dearest,

Just finished writing a long letter to Mom. It's over a week or more since I've written. I'll be on the black list.

We all awakened to a blizzard this morning. Neither El nor I prepared with rubbers or anything, so we stayed in all day except to go across to Mass. I was allowed to sleep 'til nearly eleven... your lazy wife... but it was wonderful. Sleep I do very little of anymore. I awakened in a strange room and had to think for a second where I was. I got out and found my bag and your latest letters, crawled back in to read them over. I wanted you so to be there to kick me out of bed to get breakfast... nice thought but I wouldn't have complained.

We had a quiet, nice day. I did a little wrestling with Terry. He's a little terror but I put him down. The rougher you are the better he likes it. He remembered me from last winter. You can, darling, when our little pitcher will learn at an early age to defend himself, what with a mother like me... do you mind? I loved our tussles, darling... was a little annoyed we couldn't roughneck a little more on that awful rug we had at 309 ... see what you missed? Maybe it's a good thing 'cause you might have ended up with that "strong left."

El and I started the long trek from Long Island about seven tonight. I went all the way to 195 since it would have been a little difficult with the baby and the bag, too, and the weather the way it was. You probably know an Aunt Mag Lynch across the street from 195... maybe El told you she died this week. I guess she was quite old. I remember you telling me something about her.

They received your letter of the 27th at 195 ... you always seem to know just what to say, darling. Forgetting your own grief, it was just what Pop needed. He's really holding up wonderfully well, as they all are.

We received the *Stars and Stripes* edition with your home front story. It was wonderful, darling... so simple. You just wrote about us. I'm so glad you did. Bud and Benny saw only the surface. There are so many more good families like our own that are trying to do their best to make everything worth all the struggle and discomfort. Inadequate words, I know, but you know what I mean. Yours is such a wonderful type. It isn't really a style. I'm speaking of your writing... so simple yet you get everything down and it's all so easy to understand. You see things that everyone else misses. 'Course, I'm not prejudiced since you belong to me and I to you, but I do think you are plenty good.

I'm using the pen you left behind. I left the one we bought at the O'Connors. The ink feeds fairly well in this. Maybe if I send it to the factory they could fix it.

I'm anxious to hear how you're making out with the barracks. If there is any heat now... if you are well... how is the cold and is your hand acting up again? Be sure and use that cream you had and put the glove on it at night. The heck with what anyone might think, and don't lose any of that so-called extra weight. You need it over there. This is Mrs. K. speaking... if you are wondering. I want you to stay disgustingly healthy.

I'll tell you about Slesinger. Do you mind? I thought I ought to be put in a psycho ward when I left. Of all the screwy people I ever met. I had to keep reminding myself that he had offices on Park Ave. and the fellows had given him good references. He was supposed to be leaving that afternoon for California. I reminded him that he should write a letter to Bud so he proceeds to dictate to his secretary the letter to end all letters. Check and see if Bud received one dated about Jan. 4 because just before I left he asked me to deliver the following message to Bud and he would understand.. "I had to make a hurried but sad trip to the coast a month ago and I'm leaving today on even a more sad mission." I couldn't understand why he didn't write that in his letter.

I couldn't get much satisfaction out of him. He hadn't even read the story and didn't while I was there. He told me, however, the only concrete remark that the very least he could be offered would be \$250. The only thing I can see to do is just play along and see what he learns. He wasn't able to do anything on the previous trip because he was bedridden practically the whole time with the grippe.

I'm so tired, superman. I loved that pose. Will you tuck me in now and say goodnight? I love you so much and miss you as much as I love you.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

January 8, 1945—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

Just have time for a few minutes with you tonight. It's late and as you have probably figured out by now, I'm doing my writing in the office.

I'm off to Liege again tomorrow. It's much healthier up there now that our guys have begun to push back the other way. Capt. Gilstrap (who will be editor of the edition in only the same capacity as the other officers), Bill Spear and I are going together to have a look at things pertaining to the paper and see what we can do about getting it under way. Until the Russian deal develops one way or the other, I'll probably work out of Liege on the desk as city editor. I'm sure you'll like that. Continue to send my mail as you have and it will be forwarded to me. If you want to send anything special send it in the envelopes from the office to Benny and he'll see that it gets to me. I'm sending my watch home with Earl so you can have it repaired and maybe send it back with Andy or Carl or whoever leaves after that.

I received a picture of Sherry Ann, Bill and Johnny [Lettie's children] as a sort of Christmas gift. Lee said she sent you an enlargement and I'm sure you'll agree they are the prettiest kids you ever did see. That is, they will be until Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Kiley announce "the birth of a son..." "the birth of a daughter, weight 12 pounds, etc." Don't you think so? Sure you do.

One of your very first letters... I guess it was the first... finally showed up. You wrote it while I was still at Fort Totten [waiting for his flight to London]. It was beautiful, angel. You don't have to take a back seat to anyone when it comes to expressing what's on your mind or what is in your heart.

With that I have to run... haven't had to do that in a long time, have I? Be a good girl and love me.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

January 9, 1945—New York

My darling,

I don't think anyone could be as lonely as I am for you tonight. I almost didn't write... it hurts so, not to have you near.

I wanted to write last night but I was awfully tired so I read through the eleven letters again last night and went to bed with tears, darling, for you. I think I felt last night and feel tonight the way you felt that night in St. Louis when you said, "I actually cried for you." I remember you telling me that the night of "our reunion."

Jane is out for cocktails and dinner with a friend of hers. I'm glad. I like to be alone with you now and then, just we two. The apartment is all cleaned and in order in readiness for Rita Mazo if she decides to stay with us. She called last night from Charleston and is due in tomorrow morning.

I had a letter from Mom today and she is snowbound in Massillon. She's much concerned about Warren and his lack of ability to stand on his own two feet. She says she knows he's been through a lot but, too, he must help himself and not depend too much on others. He's being permanently assigned to Amarillo and isn't too keen about the idea at all. Did you get his address? Honestly, I think I've destroyed all his letters. I haven't heard since before the holidays. Maybe you could write him a diplomatic letter... might do a little good. I know he'd like hearing from you. Seems a shame he should let himself go this way. He has so much to be thankful for and an opportunity to do something about his future.

The news in both the East and West is good tonight... makes me feel a little better, though we still have far to go, yet.

I received the pictures of Paris. Went over to the office after 5:30 and picked them up after Carl called Jane. I always call Jane at lunchtime or 3:30. That is something I miss, too, darling—not being able to call you.

I'm all showered, my hair washed, stretched out on the sofa in your robe and p.j.s. Not very glamorous looking but I'm nice and clean.

We're to be hounded by the V-2s sometime this month or next. It's very possible darling



*Another of the Paris pictures: Earl Mazo, Charles, Morrow Davis.
December 1944.*

but I'm not too concerned. Have the feeling, "couldn't care less," except you might worry. Might be good for a few of these people around here. I'm sorry, I shouldn't say things like that.

Jane brings it up so often... she can't get over our finding each other, being as our backgrounds are sort of scattered. She can't get over, either, the way I go to 195 so often, as if I actually wanted to go, she says. What I can't seem to make her understand is that I do want to go, that I look forward to going. They are as much my family as "my own" are. She just doesn't figure it that way. Thinks I'm only being nice.

I thought I'd have another letter this week but so far nothing. Perhaps tomorrow... there's always tomorrow, and the tomorrow that we'll be together again.

You would have laughed this a.m. had you seen me going over the end of the bed to turn the alarm off. I had an accident and cracked my knee on the chest. Saw stars for a second or two. Now I have a nice bruise but I'll live. Just a "Calamity Jane." You'd think I'd learn after awhile.

I washed one of the rugs tonight to see how it will do. The one in the dining alcove. I'll feel as if I've accomplished something when I get them all cleaned. Then we'll really be nice and clean.

I had to do a little forging this a.m. to send your package. You're neglecting the requests. This one has stationery, cigarettes, toothpaste, razor blades and some honey... chocolate and Lifesavers. I sent the honey... thought you might be able to use in on your bread at night. We have our first pound of sugar in quite awhile but since Jane doesn't use it and I very little; we don't mind.

Jane took over my appointment at the Blood Donor yesterday. Since I had the cold, I can't go for a couple of weeks.

Dunbar is trying to get out again. Guess he's getting tired of his close quarters.

Had dinner alone tonight here, so decided to use our dishes. Almost couldn't eat so decided I'd better try and read the paper.

Even yet, darling, I miss being awakened by you. The little time we had and I should miss such a little thing. Now I get out and turn the d--- thing off. I think I'll have you wake me every morning or should I be a good wife and take over that department?

Last night I was writing checks for insurance and found the note tucked in one of the policies you wrote the morning "after" you had to "put Mrs. K. to bed." Remember, you wrote out my theme song. I almost blushed all over again for shame... being so awful. Weren't you just a bit disgusted? I'm afraid I would have been in your place. I always wanted to be "put to bed" but conscious of it not in the unconscious stage. We must do it again sometime without the benefit of so many sidecars.

I'm wondering how Bob is... how did he take his being relieved of the desk. I'm sorry... he has such swell possibilities. I liked him a lot.

Are you still in the barracks? Can I send you anything else in the way of warm clothing? How is your cold? Please, my darling, take good care of yourself. I can't help worrying about you. Do you mind? It's probably unnecessary but I can't help it. I am so concerned, darling.

That office of ours has more rumors than “P.O.E.” [?] I don’t know what the score is going to be. The money is so good I’d like to hang on to it. We’ll see, I guess, and soon. They are really a good firm to work for. I’d kind of like to stay but doing a little different work. It’ll work out in due time. I’m not going to worry ‘til that bridge comes in sight.

Your sightseeing day sounded interesting. Still thinking about you, too, in that box seat at the Folies Bergere. Mme. Gizzy probably saw you sitting there and was completely charmed... hence, the star of the strip numbers, darling. I wonder if I could do one. I would think of that. That green monster is showing its head again... just excuse me.

It’s about tucking in time. I’d love to keep you warm tonight. Kiss me goodnight. I love you so... oh, more than you’ll ever know. Love me, darling. Goodnight.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your sweetheart

January 10, 1945—New York

My dearest,

We’ve been having a gay time... Rita, Jane and I getting acquainted. She’s swell... very much as I pictured. Me and my pictures. So far, we haven’t heard that Earl has left.

She tells me she has the “last will and testament” you all made before D-Day. I’d love to see it. Would you mind if she sent it to me when she goes home? She’s so excited and of course, we’re envious, terribly so.

I went to see Dot and Al tonight. Why did I miss you an extra lot going out there? That’s the one place I feel you just have to be with me. I think they feel it, too.

Berta is getting along pretty well. The doctor said probably the end of this month or the first week in February.

Grace Reichard [a Jersey City neighbor] had an accident. She and five other girls dressed to go sleighing before Christmas and going down a steep hill, the sled she was on struck a cinder, which threw it out of control. Grace went right over it and landed against a tree headfirst... the result, a bad concussion. She has had to remain in bed for two weeks and will be there awhile yet. She’s getting along beautifully, though, and the doctor says she’ll be all right.

Jean Cosgrove [one of Charles’ gang] had her baby... another boy. Some folks have such luck. Sorry, darling. I am a bit disappointed but not to the extent that I’ll end up with ulcers (remember).

I think Mrs. K. loves Mr. K. She spent her whole lunch hour in the card shop, buying valentines for her husband. She came to five minutes over the lunch hour and remembered she hadn’t eaten so dashed in and grabbed a sandwich to eat in the office. Could it be I’m still on that cloud?

Your two letters, written Dec. 27 and 28, arrived today. I’ve carried your grief in my heart. I knew how you would feel and that you would be that way. I have only my love to comfort you and my prayers at this great distance. It isn’t enough... truly it isn’t enough. I’ve thought of you so since the

news... tried to find my way to you to ease any bitterness you might hold. I won't say any more. If any more news comes, I'll forward it to you. I can't write about it, darling, and I know you can't very well, but you must know I'm with you.

A rumor tonight via the cable service... you had returned to Liege. I was hoping, but perhaps it will be better. They are worried here about what jobs they will have when they go back. At least they know what to expect... you fellows didn't.

We had a letter from Bud... strictly Bud, too, a masterpiece. He asks if we will please write. Talks of living with a Russian prince in Paris.

Al looks so much better. He really came back in a hurry. I'm glad for Dot's sake. She looks a lot better, too. Peace of mind has done a lot, I know, not having Al to worry her quite so much. He's still on his diet. Al and Bill went in to see Pop this week.

Mom is still in Ohio. She's visiting Aunt Mae now for a couple of days. I'm glad she's having such a nice visit... hope and pray she finds the house all right when she goes back. I'd love to see her here for a couple of days because golly knows when I'll get to go home.

I'm anxious to hear more about Warren. I thought surely I'd hear by now from him. I hope he isn't starting a martyr act now. From him I couldn't take that.

We'll probably be busy little Villagers with our company for the next few days. Joe met her at the station and of course, never having met her had a little difficulty since Carl told him she had on a white hat (in January?) when all the time it was brown with white feathers. I think it took him an hour to find her after stopping heaven knows how many girls with white kerchiefs on... the only white headgear he could find. I can just see him doing it. He looks like such a timid soul when actually he isn't.

Darling, the ache grows a little more along with the same disgust you have for what's keeping us apart, but, please, may we not get better.. either of us. We've been through so much together without it, and it has to be only a little while longer. We'll see it through and make up for every second apart. Please draw on that wonderful patience we both seem to be blessed with even though now and then I think it leaves me in the lurch.

I thought surely at least one package would be through by now. I tried so hard to find an anniversary card, too, darling, to get to you before Wednesday next week, but you'll have to be satisfied with only a cable. That's going to be the second anniversary without you... according to your promise I have six more to spend alone. The seventh will be August 17, 1945 and you said you'd be home then if not before.

Put your arms around me and tell me you love me... whisper all the beautiful things you tell me in my ear... tuck me in nice and kiss me goodnight. I love you so, so very much, and miss you as much. Goodnight, my dearest.

All my love and kisses, always your sweetheart

January 11, 1945—New York

My beloved,

The day started perfect with your December 31 letter waiting for me in the little box early this a.m. Your New Year's Eve message was in this one. By this time, you will know how I spent mine... as quiet as you did. If I only have you to look at next New Years without any fanfare, hijinks or tinsel, darling, I guess there won't be another girl in the universe as happy as I'll be. Al and Dot went to bed at eleven-thirty; since Al still is drinking soda water and ginger ale, they didn't see much point in going out. I'm sure a great many people spent as quiet a New Year as ours. This hasn't been the time for celebration.

Rita is quite upset about Earl now... afraid he got tired of waiting for his orders and decided to go on one last mission or something while waiting. She hasn't heard anything else since his message for her to be in New York on the ninth. In the meantime, she's resting comfortably on our sofa. It's nice she's so tiny. I feel like a giant beside her so you can imagine.

We all went shopping tonight... looking for shoes. Mrs. K. would like a real glamorous-looking pair to keep until Mr. K. is able to appreciate them. So far, I haven't found what I wanted so I'll hang on to my coupon a little longer.



From Billee and Charles' wedding album.

Rita asked me to remember her to you. She was thrilled with our wedding pictures. Do you mind if I'm a bit proud of them? They are so wonderful of you. You look so happy... we both did a good job at that. I just love showing them off. I carried them to Long Island last weekend and all the neighbors came in to see.

The three of us had lunch at Louis today. Remember the Tuesday before we were married we had lunch with Jane and Benny there outside. What beautiful days they were. We were so busy forgetting everything but us.

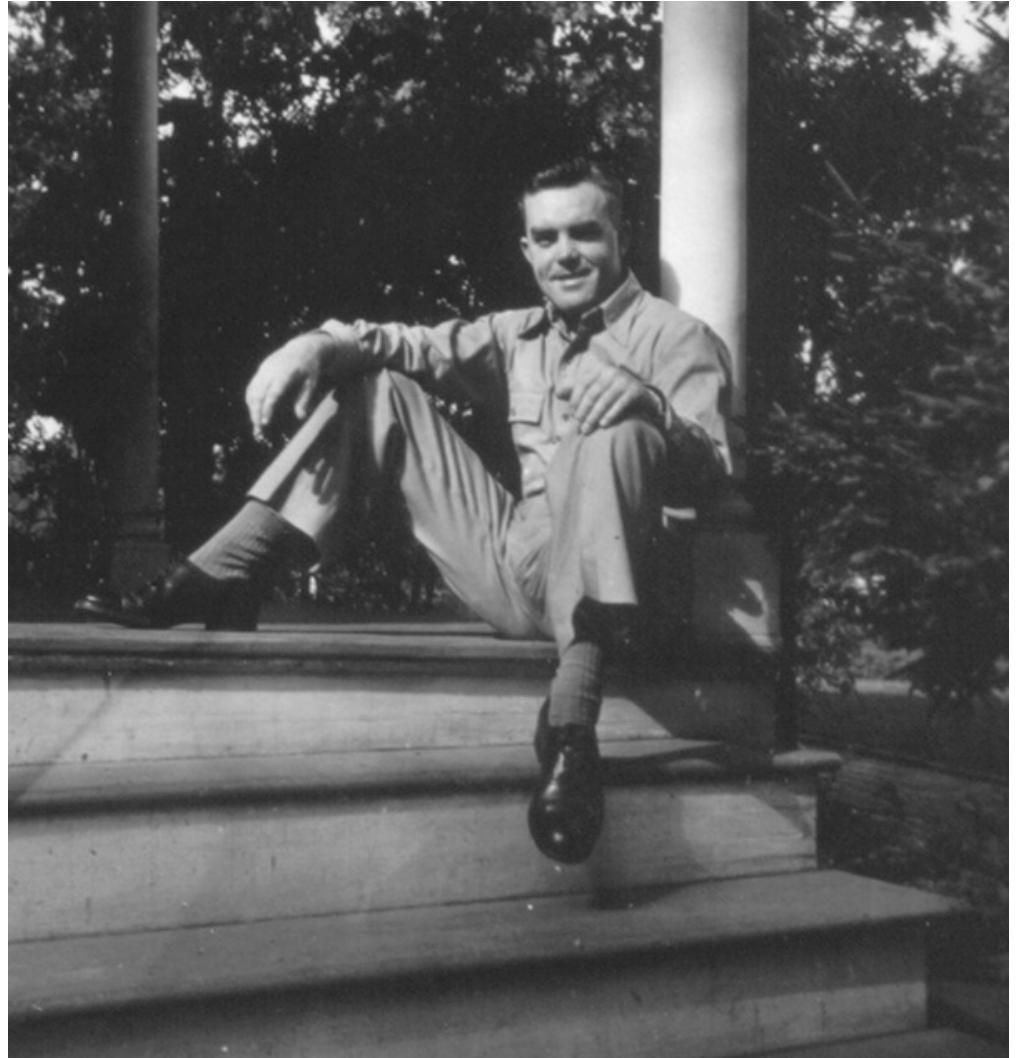
It has been a wonderful year for us, barring the recent sadness. Everything we had dreamed and hoped for came true. I'm fairly sure our little "pitcher" isn't going to put in an appearance. It will be nicer to share the "warming up" and the "wind-up" together. Perhaps we tried too hard... perhaps. We don't seem very bright along those lines, I guess. We'll learn in time. We

have been and are so happy in our love, darling. I'm sure in good time that dream will be realized, too, and you'll be showing off a Kiley to everyone.

This letter relieved the tension... I've had a letter. I could tell that you were considerably better than in the last two letters I've had. Please, don't try to cover up your feelings in a letter. That I couldn't take. Good or bad, I have to know and I promised I would do the same.

You know what I remembered today? The picnic [on their honeymoon]. You stretched out on the blanket trying so hard to sleep and me annoying you. I loved that day. It was one of my special dreams come true. I'd always dreamed of picnicking with you, darling, and how wonderful it would be. The whole day was perfect. I forgot everything except our being together.

We must find that spot to go to when you come home. I'm going to have Marg check on this Tupper Lake through her cousin who has been there several times. Seems there is a lodge that you can stay in if you prefer or they have these scattered cabins. The latter, of course, we would rather have. I think, though, when we can it would be super to have a place in the Ramapos as



Charles at Oak Lodge on their honeymoon. August, 1944.

Father John suggested. Even if we only build one large room and bath. We could do it in such a way that we could add other rooms. It could be near enough to commute and we could stay all summer. I'd love it. How about you? I'm afraid now we wouldn't be able to get the necessary priorities for plumbing, etc., or would you like a bath, instead? I've made up my mind, though, that you are going to be so comfortable with everything when you come home to stay. We are not roughing it. You've had enough of that, if you never have any more.

It's cold tonight, awfully so. I'm glad it is nice and warm in here. I'm in the dining alcove all ready to hop in bed when you kiss me goodnight.

You'd be quite proud and amazed at your wife. She's the one that gets up first, gets breakfast started and finally gets Jane started. I let her sleep about fifteen minutes longer since she leaves long after I do.

Have you thought, darling? I hadn't 'til El mentioned it. We're the only ones that can keep the Kiley name going on now.

My darling, this missing you is something. You say, “enjoy yourself” but I can’t, really. Maybe for a few minutes at a time but you’re so much a part of me, I can’t forget, and don’t want to for a minute.

I guess I’m ready to be tucked in now as soon as I say my prayers. I have said “thank you” so many times. You don’t think He might get tired hearing of my gratitude? I can’t forget. I’m so very happy we’re the way we are... that we stay so close to Him. I love you, darling, with all my heart and being and you have made me as happy as anyone could ever be.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

January 12, 1945—New York

My darling,

We heard via Carl that you are definitely in Liege once more. Things have quieted down in that sector from the news and we are on the offensive this time, and I pray we can hold them back. It’s so much more encouraging than the last month of news. Also in the same cable Benny mentions mail being snafu’d again so I presume you aren’t hearing, too. Our most recent letter is from you dated Dec. 31. Jane thinks Benny isn’t writing... she gets terribly down and thinks it’s his fault instead of the mail. Neither does she like his close association with Bob. Bucknell told her today that he thought Bob was going to be put in charge of the cable service supplying the editions over there with news and Benny would assist, so Bob wouldn’t have an opportunity of interfering with the policy of the paper. Since Benny is to be put with him Jane is afraid he is involved, too.

They aren’t telling Libby about Morrow’s return since he didn’t give any instructions. I don’t think we should take over the responsibility either. I’ll let them do whatever they want.

Rita is staying with relatives in Long Island tonight but she’ll be back tomorrow.

We went to a movie this evening, “Together Again” with Charles Boyer and Irene Dunne. Light comedy... strictly diversion, darling... situation a little exaggerated but we enjoyed it a lot.

I thought I’d hear from Mom regarding her tentative trip here but nothing so far.

There’s a long feature article in this week’s Life by a Cpl. Russ Eigel, a former newspaperman with the 101st now. Do you know him? I haven’t read it yet but it looks interesting. I have an extra Time to send you, too. I’ve been sending them in the boxes each week. I’d like to hear that you have received one or more. There are six, I’m sure, on the way.

We decided we’d do something with our hair tonight. Jane has decided I’m the Ingrid Bergman type. Can’t see it myself, but I remember your telling me once after seeing “For Whom the Bell Tolls.” Did you change your mind? Probably.



It's "ishy" out tonight. Snow and now rain. I'm wondering if you're warm, darling. That bothers me a lot... your discomfort. I hate it. I'd like to have your slippers and robe all ready for you every night and a comfortable chair. I'm going to make you so "comfy" always. Remind me if I should forget now and then. I think I'll baby you a little. I can't ever remember anyone but you doing that to me, not even at home. Do you mind, hon... but I liked it.

I must remember to tell you: I got a bill just before Christmas from Mr. Corrigan for \$27.00 for the cars. I forgot all about him. Didn't you? Anyway, the Rooneys paid me the \$28.00 so I had a dollar left over. I don't remember what I did with that.

Speaking of money, Christmas really ate into our savings plan but I'm getting straightened around and can get back in the groove. Everything was so awfully expensive. Once I thought I'd just forget it all, but decided that wouldn't be right either. We'll get along.

I thought after the fellows go back and then come, etc., I'd have Dot and Al over for dinner and get tickets to a show or a hockey game. I think they'd appreciate seeing a show, though, since they've been confined so of late.

You'll laugh at Mrs. K. and her scatterbrain, darling, but she rode past her stop this a.m. for no apparent reason except she was thinking about Mr. K. Anyway, she arrived at 54th and Fifth Avenue so disgusted with herself for not being able to concentrate better about her surroundings, she just walked back. Needless to say, the cold air definitely awakened her and she was only fifteen minutes late for work. What did you ever do, darling, to get a model like me that doesn't work on all cylinders. Could be that she's a little in love. May I use that alibi?

I'm glad we live here. There is so much of you here. I can look across the room and remember you sitting on the floor leaning against the chest or stretched out on the sofa. You're sort of all over, darling. I'd hate to have to move from here.

Jane says I'm making her conscience hurt so she's writing to Benny. She's so like Benny in so many ways, getting all upset over little things. Funny, isn't it? I can remember a time when I did but it's a million years ago.

We're eating your cookies. The box was too long to go in the overseas box so I'll have to be content with sending you smaller boxes of cookies. I know I shouldn't be eating them since I'm a long way from 110 but I haven't gained any since you've left.

If I can get it and one of the fellows will take it back, I'll send you a bottle of Scotch. Maybe Andy will bring it back to you. Incidentally, he and Marg are at Fort Knox, Kentucky for their two weeks. He's doing a story there.

Did I tell you we had a letter from Bud written as only he can write... really crazy, but Jane and I were amazed that he'd take time out to write to us. We sent him Christmas cards. That started it all off.

I hate to leave you, darling, but I have rattled on quite awhile. At this stage, I'd better go and shower, and make for the bed. Hold me close for a bit, darling. I love the feel of your arms around me,

holding me ever so close. Tuck me in, darling. I love you so, so much. Miss me, and love me more. Please take good care of yourself for me.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

January 13, 1945—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

Here's your ol' pappy back from the mountains agin. I arrived back from Liege this morning at 2:00 after a frigid trip... brrrrr... I get the shivers when I think of it. In a way it was a beautiful trip... snow all the way through France and into Belgium. The Ardennes Mountains were like winter portraits. The bad feature, of course, was the condition of the roads. We didn't take any chances, though, and just babied our way along. I still have uppermost in my mind that warning to take good care of myself. So, no chances are being taken.

I came back to take care of a few more details... communications, supplies, personnel, etc., and figure to go back up there within a few days to get the paper out at long last. The weather here in Paris and in Liege has been really cold these last few days, but I'm well protected and have been inside with the exception of the round trip. I bought an officer's combination field coat, lined and all, for \$30 dollars, hon, which leaves me a little off balance for the month but it was worth it. I won't need the money, though. I have some left that will keep me going fine.

While I was gone two of your letters arrived. Others from cousin Jackie (Jacqueline) Warren [Ella's sister Josephine's daughter], and Bette were also here waiting for me. The cables from New York told of Rita's arrival "et staying cum villagers," of more on Andy's trip and that Slesinger was still handling the Molotoff business for me. A cable from Hodenfield said that Sherman Productions is reputable and producer of the Hopalong Cassidy series. I still don't know what's going on, though. I've cabled Larsen again and asked him to check again with Andy on it.

Bette's letter said Pop was taking the news of Eddie pretty well but I'm still worried about him. Jackie's letter wasn't much but it served to keep me in touch with her.

I couldn't tell which numbers your letters were hon, but they were postmarked Dec. 28 and 31. The first included Marg's card and the second the letters from Mrs. Frost and Mr. Donnell together with the pix taken at Libby's apartment. The cabin pictured on the card is exactly what I have in mind. How about you? **AND** please don't tell me you have ideas about which you'll **TELL ME LATER!** Let's have them **NOW**. Oh, I could wring your beautiful neck when you do that.

I loved the long, long letter of the 31st. [missing] ... the *Stars and Stripes* gathering, your impressions of Graff, the Giblins, etc... the possible operation you didn't tell me about... the cold which kept you down for so long and which I don't like one little bit.

Honestly, darling, I had no idea that an operation was on your mind when you went to Jack. Believe me, I would not have come back had you told me. I don't know how I would have stayed but I would.

I'm very, very tired... reaction to the long ride yesterday... so I'll save the rest of your letters for tomorrow. I'll be at Communion with you, sweetheart.

'Night and one... two... three kisses

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

January 13, 1945—New York

Darling,

Another Saturday evening practically over. Another night of missing you ever so much. Shall I tell you what we did?

Rita came back from her relatives this afternoon and went shopping with Jane. We all, Jane, Rita and Brad (the girl from Des Moines) and I went around the corner to Felix's. Not too bad and not too good. We all had a couple of Manhattans before going over and then one there. I guess we came back about nine-thirty. However, Rita left earlier to return to her aunt for the weekend. Paul Ally from NBC came over for a little while, then we all went out to get a taxi to see Brad home, when we decided to have a hamburger so proceeded to the dinette by the theatre, an awful place... so darn dirty, but we had them anyway.

Mrs. K. got a little fuzzy on the Manhattans for some reason but she behaved herself. I kept thinking about you, darling. In Felix's they played "When Irish Eyes are Smiling." In spite of my fuzziness that night, I'll never forget you singing that to me in one of the bars that night. Your wife was a disgrace. You never said, darling, but maybe you were annoyed at me.

It's such a glorious, wonderful thing to be in love with you. There are no words. Every day makes me believe it all the more that I am actually Mrs. K., loving you so much.

I'm anxious about this Liege deal and looking forward to your letters.

I sent you a cable, darling. I wanted you to have it before our anniversary Wednesday. Three long, hard years, darling, since that night so long ago at home, at the YMCA. I can see you yet starting into the room and me wondering who was going to find the chair next to me. I wonder, darling, what would have happened if you'd moved in the other direction of the room. There were other girls there besides me. I loved you so even then, I'm sure and didn't realize it. I remember how much I liked the way you looked that first night. These months of waiting seem so far away, without you near.

It's getting so late and it was an awful hour this morning before I decided I could sleep.

I love you so, my darling, so very much. Take proper care of Mr. K. Miss me and love me.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

January 14, 1945—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

Like the new stationery? Something new every day. I found this stuff in the office today and decided to try it out on.

Last night I left off talking about your letters of Dec. 28 and 30 [missing]. The pictures taken in Lib's apartment were swell, hon, but what did you do to your hair? I don't remember you parting it in the middle. 'Course you still look beautiful... but a little different. I'm not complaining, just asking how come?

Seeing Lib's picture reminded me of something that's between the two of us. A couple of weeks ago I proposed Morrow's name to go home and it came through. When he came to Paris from Holland to get his orders and get ready he looked pretty shaky and I found out he had been drinking more than a little during the last couple of months. He has been in Paris about two weeks now and shows no sign of going on the wagon. Lib is quite aware I'm sure that he is what you might call more than a moderate drinker. He isn't the noisy, troublesome kind but rather quiet. When he isn't drinking, he's the most lovable guy you would want to meet. What I'm driving at is that I hope he leaves his drinking habits here or his homecoming as far as Lib is concerned, isn't going to be very happy.

Re-reading the letters warrants me to caution you again, please, sweetheart, take extra care of yourself. Your cold must have been more than an ordinary one.

I can say... "I told you so" ... and that you should have bought that warm coat. But I'll go on believing you are doing what you think best. The coat may not have enabled you to avoid the cold but it sure enough would not have caused you to get one. You just use common sense and don't take any more chances with colds, hear? You are subject to colds more in New York than you would be in any other part of the country. So, once again, please be careful.

You asked if the Congressional investigation will have any effect on me. No, it won't. In fact, the powers that be here welcome the investigation because it is felt we would be able to clear the picture once and for all. However, the feeling is that the investigation will never come off. I think we can forget about it. The chief squawk, made by visiting Congressmen, was that the Paris edition didn't publish enough unbiased news from home. When they were here, the paper was a four-pager due to



Billee in Libby's apartment, December 1944.

the shortage of newsprint but for the last month, it has been an eight-pager seven days a week. And, there has been plenty of news from home. I wish I could send the paper to you but there is not any foreign distribution of the Paris paper. While I'm in Liege, though, I hope to be able to send them to you myself. Being city editor up there, I'll naturally have a special interest in the paper.

I'm moving up to Liege on Tuesday for good. We'll have a limited but capable staff to begin with and I know we'll do a good job. Our paper will service the First and Ninth Armies plus troops in Holland, Belgium and part of France. By "troops" I mean rear echelon, medical, signal and other units not part of armies.

I can't get over that cabin on Marg's Christmas card. I can just picture you standing in front of it, wearing a snow suit (maybe baby blue with a white angora sailor hat and red ball on top of it).

No, sweetheart, I didn't wince when you mentioned Freddy's name this time. Don't care now. Not as jealous as I used to be either, I guess. Is that good or bad? Still, I'm glad you and Jane had a good time.

Getting back to the *Stars and Stripes* gathering where I left off last night... I can see you didn't have a very lively crowd. Andy is... well, you know he is motivated by whatever mood he's in... Joe is more at home in the company of men... Carl gets a little childish... Graf is just as you pictured him... Giblin is a swell guy but exceptionally quiet and shy... so there you are. You needed Benny and I to wake them up. Oh well, that's the way it goes.

You made me smile (through a frown of anxiety) when you said... "Being married and a trip to Dr. Doyle has left me no illusions and very little modesty."

The news of your visit to Jack and why you went gave me a start as it naturally would, angel. But I'm not angry. I know you did what you thought best by not telling me. But, darling, you won't ever lose your modesty, I know. You just couldn't and I would be awfully disappointed if you did. No, you'll always be my modest little maiden.

For the first time you mentioned getting the 100 dollars I sent so that takes a load from my mind. Within another month, maybe I'll be able to send another hundred.

And, so 'night, sweetheart, for now. I'll be back tomorrow night before heading Liegewards.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

January 14, 1945—New York

Darling,

A strange message came today via the *Stars and Stripes*. Benny would like to know if we "remember Pearl Harbor." The only point I can figure he is trying to make is that the mail isn't getting over and perhaps he thinks Jane isn't writing.

You both have cables on the way... should be there tomorrow anyway. We both sent night-letters. Perhaps that will rest Benny's mind a little.

We've been in the apartment all day. The weather has been horrible out... a blizzard. I could just see Benny in the window seat today as I was watching the people being blown around below and the ones taking headers crossing the street. Every time I looked out someone was picking themselves up.

Carl has gone to Chicago to finish his furlough. I guess Andy is due back this week. Joe is in charge for the present. Earl is still waiting because of the weather. Rita is staying with her aunt today. She went out last night after our dinner at Felix's.

I don't know how sensible my letter was last night. After the three Manhattans I had, I wasn't quite sure of what I wrote. Will you excuse me, Mr. K? I don't know how we got started on the Manhattans. When I came in from work Jane and Rita were waiting for me with the glasses all lined up in the kitchen.

I'm going to the Federal Reserve in the Wall Street section for an interview. Mrs. O'Connor spoke to the personnel director and arranged for the interview. She's awfully nice. So we shall see what they have to offer.

I guess Mom is still in Ohio. I haven't heard any more. It's nearly a month. I'm glad she isn't taking any chances about going back in the bad weather.

Mrs. K. tried her hand at a new cake recipe this afternoon... sort of party-style. It's pretty good... has cherries in it. Benny will have my scalp when he comes home because at this time we're having a sizable piece of it with a cup of tea. I wish you could be helping us. Don't scold, but I have to be an expert by the time you come home. This makes the third different kind now.

I read the Times and Trib besides the News. Enclosed are a few items of interest. I'm going to be on the lookout for sports items you will be able to use in your files for reference.

I don't remember how the subject came up earlier this evening or what led to it but, anyway, over a malted milk with Jane and Benny, last summer before you came home, Bud made the remark, "I wonder if Kiley ever slept with Billee, since they are being married and have been together so little." Benny quickly squelched him, if that could be done, with, "Hell, no. You know Kiley better than that." Considering the source, I'm making allowances. Funny how some people think. Don't know why I bothered to mention it, darling, except I was a little annoyed and wondered what your reaction might be. Do you suppose anyone else might have had an idea like that?

I've missed you so many times today. Kicked the darn chest in the hall a couple of times to relieve the tension. Guess that was being confined too much. We went to twelve o'clock Mass today around the corner. It's a nice, quiet spot. Did you ever happen in there? I'm speaking of the Spanish church.

We had such a good dinner Saturday, down in your place somehow, instead of our own. Suddenly didn't care whether I ate or not. It was everything you would have liked and I wanted you there.

It's funny the two of us living together always is giving me the impression of you and Benny being together and I know that you aren't.

Jane is really quite concerned about his being with Bob so much. I'm trying to smooth it over until she knows. All we hear are rumors from the *Stars and Stripes* as to what they think is taking place.

How do you like the house... merely an idea... This is one of the better ones. Lots of room in it. The rooms seem to be good-sized. You don't mind my sending ideas to you? The little boy reminded me of you. Maybe it's the grin. I would like little boys, darling, and have them be all like you. You don't mind, of course. I may be able to arrange a little girl for you since you seem to want one. They are such a lot of trouble and not nearly so much fun as little boys. I'd better hush. We'll have a girls' softball team... perish the thought.

I don't like not knowing just where you are. Joe said tonight that you were either there or on the way, so I don't really know.

Tonight I'm remembering the letter you wrote for Christmas, that dreams didn't satisfy now and every day the thought is coming home. If any two people ever belonged together, darling, it's us. I know you are feeling the same way... but we go on.

I'd better let you tuck me in, my darling, while I still can. Please, how about an extra good night kiss because I love you so much. Love me, and miss me.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

PS: I forgot—the John R. Esaias is my mother's oldest and only living brother so that makes two Uncle Johns for us. I used to be a favorite of his when I was very young. I haven't seen him in at least a dozen years. I'm surprised he sent the card. Aunt Katherine and Uncle Fred saw him not so long ago so maybe they talked about you.

Goodnight, darling. I love you very much. Mrs. K.

January 14, 1945—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

These are simply a few lines to accompany the small gifts Earl will give you. They aren't much, angel, but just about the best you can do in Paris these days. The Schiaparelli, I have been assured, is tops. The Chanel is questionable. You'll have to judge for yourself. I'm just hoping it doesn't evaporate during the air trip.

I'm missing you ever so much, darling, and while I shouldn't feel this way, I'm awfully envious of Earl and Morrow. I'd give anything to be going back with them. And, that's the way they felt when I went home. It can't be long before our days are done here, though, sweetheart. Just give me that great big smile and everything will be all right.

Inasmuch as I've been to Liege for a few days, I haven't written since the early part of the week and once more I'm asking you to understand a lapse in my letters now and then. In a few days it appears as if I'll be in Liege for good. That is, I'll work out of there mostly. Now and again I'll come to Paris and get together with Benny but Liege will be my job. It's okay up there now except that it's cold with lots of snow. I've got a lot of warm clothing, however, and I'll be working inside. When I get

organized there I'll certainly get back to my former nightly dates with you. Seems like we haven't spent much time with each other at all during the last few weeks. Got to do something about that, don't we?

So... 'bye for a little while, angel. I'll be near you always.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

January 15, 1945—New York

Darling,

You'd probably be a bit amused if you'd been sitting in on the conversation I just adjourned by leaving. That same old argument... what can we do to materially aid the war effort to bring you guys home a bit sooner and of course the WAC, WAVES and Red Cross entered into it.

Did I tell you I visited the Red Cross overseas division? They have need for assistant staff... hospital assistants. She said that it wouldn't do to ask for a specific field that you'd probably be sent to another theatre. As Jane says, if we have to sit it out another year we may as well do it in as useful a way as is possible. She's right but still I think your peace of mind is terribly important to the war effort, too, so that kind of holds me. I have a feeling you'd worry. You'd probably feel the same as we do, darling.



Risë Stevens (1913-2013) was an American opera star who was probably the Metropolitan Opera's most well-known Carmen during the 20th century.

Jane and I went to see Risë Stevens with the Firestone Orchestra at NBC. We wanted Rita to go but she has such a bad cold she's decided to stay in a few days with it so she'll be well when Earl arrives.

Jane is much happier tonight. She has two letters from Benny telling her a little of the news that's going on so all is forgiven. This mail isn't recent. The last date was January 1 so that's two weeks old. I'd love a little mail myself. It's the middle of last week... not too long but it seems that way. I think it was Tuesday last.

I went to the Federal Reserve to see about the position, but no luck. They have only routine jobs starting at \$25.00 [per week]. I want something better. I still have time to look. Saw an ad yesterday. They would like airplane mechanic trainees at La Guardia field. Starting salary while training is \$158.00 a month. If I can't get a job paying a decent salary, hon, don't be surprised if I do

something like that. I think it would be kind of fun. Something new and I'd be around airplanes. Don't worry about it, however.

We had more tea and cake tonight. The cake is more than half gone since yesterday. That's awful but I never did like stale cake.

The weather is still "ishie" and we're in for more snow. They aren't scheduling any take-offs or landings from La Guardia because of the weather.

The weather has probably had a great deal to do with the mail snafu and when it clears we'll probably get a little mail... I hope.

I'd love to hear that you had received a package and I'd love to find some cigarettes to put in another. Tell me, darling, in Liege would you be able to cook anything? If I knew that I could send you things that could be warmed. Let me know about that and be sure and add a request now and then. I'm liable to be caught forging and that would be awful.

That wonderful meat market on 8th Ave., where you used to go, must like Jane and me because today he sold me lamb chops and ham... and there isn't any meat at all in so many places. I'll never get over Jane coming home Saturday with a whole pound of butter and a pound of bacon. Benny will start to worry about her when he learns of it. It wouldn't bother me if we didn't have any of it. I can always get along with using something else.

Benny said you people ran out of dough New Years Eve so had to go home. I know you planned to be home early. In yesterday's paper I noticed they ordered all night clubs, etc., closed because of the fuel shortage.

I'm going over to 195 tomorrow night. Haven't seen them since last weekend when El and I went to the O'Connors.

I had a long letter from Joan and Ernest Blumenauer in Massillon. She had spent some time with Mom... said she was well except for a cold. The latest is that Lee and Harry [Lettie and her first husband, Harry Strohaker] are planning to go to Florida. Harry has a bronchial condition he can't get rid of so the doctor prescribed Florida for awhile. I don't know any of the details.

The news is still going our way. Here's a little more on Wright Bryan that came through NBC. The fellow that escaped that was with Beatty and Bryan said he saw the German doctor remove the bullets from Bryan's legs and tell him he'd be all right soon. The message they received from him, however, came from an enlisted men's prison camp. This fellow, Mencken, I think it is or something like that, is in Washington and said that they took all of Bryan's identification except one dog tag so maybe that's why he's in the G.I. camp. Bryan and Earl were good friends before the war. He's from Clemson, South Carolina or did you know that already?

Rita is amazed at the long letters we write every night. She's afraid she's been neglecting Earl with her short ones.

The gals are sleeping and I'm in the kitchen. Kind of lazy tonight... only washed my hair. Oh, and I stewed some pears. That wouldn't interest you. Like the baked apples I had to eat by myself. You

don't eat things that are good for you. I'm scolding you, darling. I'll never forget the fuss you made over the yellow squash. I loved to watch you in our "kitchen," quite efficient, too, I'll have to admit. Honest, hon, I haven't had any good French fries since you left. Just don't seem to have the knack.

I thought I'd mention that no one from the *Stars and Stripes* has made a move to do anything for Rita since the day she arrived. Could be they don't know Earl. Oh, well... just one of those things. We expect too much I guess.

Wonder where you are, darling... Paris or Liege. I'd love for you to be here. I'm not very glamorous tonight, however, with my hair all pinned up. Too bad, darling...you couldn't be married to someone that could be glamorous even with her hair up. Somehow or other I always manage to look like "Billee with her hair up."

I remember the night you leaned on the dresser though, while I was apologizing for looking so unglamorous and you said I'd been blessed with other qualities. I love you so... all these little things come into my mind.

We had such fun... I loved every second of it but I'm missing you so. I miss seeing you come out of the shower all shining-looking. You were so clean... that little boy scrubbed look. I miss teasing you about putting your shoes on before your trousers (I'm still amazed over that one... seems so impractical). The shadow-boxing and your slapping me around ever so gently. I haven't forgotten how you scolded me about putting matches in the sink. You know I find myself doing that... starting to and I remember and put them with the trash. I remember how lovely and wonderful it is to be tucked in at night by you, Mr. K. I miss you so... your gentleness, your goodnight kiss and the warmth of you.

I'd better say goodnight, darling. Tuck me in and love me a little. Goodnight, my darling. I love you so much more that I could ever put down here.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

January 16, 1945—Jersey City

Darling,

I'm at 195 and since the weather is so bad decided to stay the night and go over in the morning.

Everyone is fine. Pop was snowbound from work because his driver couldn't use his car so he plans on going in by train in the morning.

It's a beautiful blizzard out, darling, if you can call it beautiful. I'm not too keen about it myself.

At long last a letter arrived today... also one from you for Jane. It's a good thing I received one, too, after waiting a week.

It's the one about Russia, darling. Do you mind if I don't talk about it tonight? I'd rather not express my feelings tonight. I just can't talk about it now. I seem to have the same feeling as the night you

told me you had the definite orders to go back... remember? It was in Childs and I wouldn't look at you because I knew I'd cry if I did. Everything inside seemed to turn to stone.

It may be a wonderful opportunity, darling. It probably is. You must do whatever you think best if it is up to you. I won't say anything more. Perhaps tomorrow.

El hasn't heard any more from Tom since the one letter. It's probably the weather interfering again.

She hasn't shown your letters, mentioning Eddie before you heard the news, to either Pop or Bette... just as well. There hasn't been another from Eddie other than the one I told you about that was written December 6.

Charlie Jacobi, Eddie's friend, received a letter from Johnnie Ryan who was with Eddie and in a PS he says to tell El a letter is on the way to her giving all the details so he must have been with Eddie. That letter was dated the 29th so she should be receiving one soon from Johnny. Perhaps that will tell a little more.

Packages are on the way, darling, with stationery but I don't mind the typing especially if it's more convenient. So please, hon, use it whenever you like. I don't care what you have to write on.

I'm missing you horribly tonight. Even the letter doesn't help too much. I knew I couldn't stay around Rita and Jane tonight. I had to get out and I wanted to come over here. It's the next best thing to being near you.

Russia keeps coming back in my mind. I know there isn't anything definite and I shouldn't get excited but I can't help thinking about it. Please, darling, always remember I want you to do what you think is best and I want you to be happy in your work and if you think Russia is a good deal, go ahead and do what you like. Russia or Timbuktu. I'll still be here, darling, no matter how long. Just don't prolong it longer than is necessary, is all I ask. If you have to be over there you may as well take advantage of the best opportunities even if it means Russia. Just don't change places with Bud, else I'm afraid you'll have a WAC or a WAVE on your hands.

Tuck me in now, darling. I'm so weary and I've an early rising scheduled for the a.m. Goodnight, my darling. I love you so, so much.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

January 17, 1945—New York

My darling,

I thought once I wasn't going to be able to write, but I want so to be with you and this is the only way.

Funny, darling, almost as if it had been planned, the letter you wrote Dec. 17 arrived today, a month late, I know, but very timely.

I always wondered what must have been going on in that mind of yours on the eve of our wedding. I couldn't believe you just went to sleep. I was so excited, and everything was almost more than I

could believe. Once I thought I'd have to call you... it was quite late, too... just to make myself know you were actually only a few miles away. We had waited an eternity it seemed for that day and it was waiting for us only twelve hours away.

Tonight I was remembering how tenderly you held me while I cried on your shoulder, after we were married and a couple of times after. You must have begun to think I was going to be a crybaby.

I needed you so tonight, more than ever.



Billee arriving at St. Al's for the wedding. Marguerite Heuser was her maid of honor. The wedding dress was Eleanor's because there hadn't been time to shop for one after she got the news that Charles had come home from Europe. Jersey City, August 1944.

I shall never forget walking toward you that morning. All my dreams were at the end of that walk in you, waiting there for me. When you took my hand I knew that everything would always be all right and whatever came, I could bear it. That's why I was no longer frightened of the ceremony or what followed. I knew from that moment we'd always be together... always. It's nearly five months today, but our sixth 17th, besides being three years ago tonight we met. Seems so much longer and while my whole being wants you here, where I can see you and be with you, my heart is at peace because I know we are together forever and ever, and I thank God with all my heart that I have made you happy, that I am what you waited so long for. I'm so grateful for being Mrs. K. and so, so happy.

You will have to accept my plain words. My heart is so full of such beautiful music for you that mere words are terribly inadequate. I want to be near you when I can tell you with a look, maybe words, how much I love you.

Last night, trying to go to sleep, I smelled Pop's cigarette. He must have been restless, too. I nearly cried because, of course, I thought of the night you got up to smoke a cigarette. I haven't forgotten a second, darling, of our being together those three and half months, not a second. I hope and pray my cable reached you, or some mail reached you, today. It's such a very special day. I had planned to come home and have a quiet dinner with Jane but El wanted me to go to a dinner and show with her and Mrs. O'Connor. We ate

in Hamburger Mary's and saw Tommy Dorsey on the stage. All I did was miss you and remember the night we were at the Capitol together with Jane and Benny.

Did I brazenly rush the Doyles, darling, or are you still teasing me? Honestly, hon, I hardly remember that. Suddenly they were leaving in such a rush. It was about time, anyway. I was so deliciously drowsy and at peace with the world. I do remember, however, being carried over the threshold after they left, and going to bed awfully early. Seems as if it was the middle of the afternoon. Who did you say was brazen? We had such beautiful times, and I love you so much.

I'm so, so tired. Will you tuck me in now "in my house." Love me, and miss me more and please, please take care of yourself for Mrs. K.

All my love and kisses, always your sweetheart

January 18, 1945—Liege

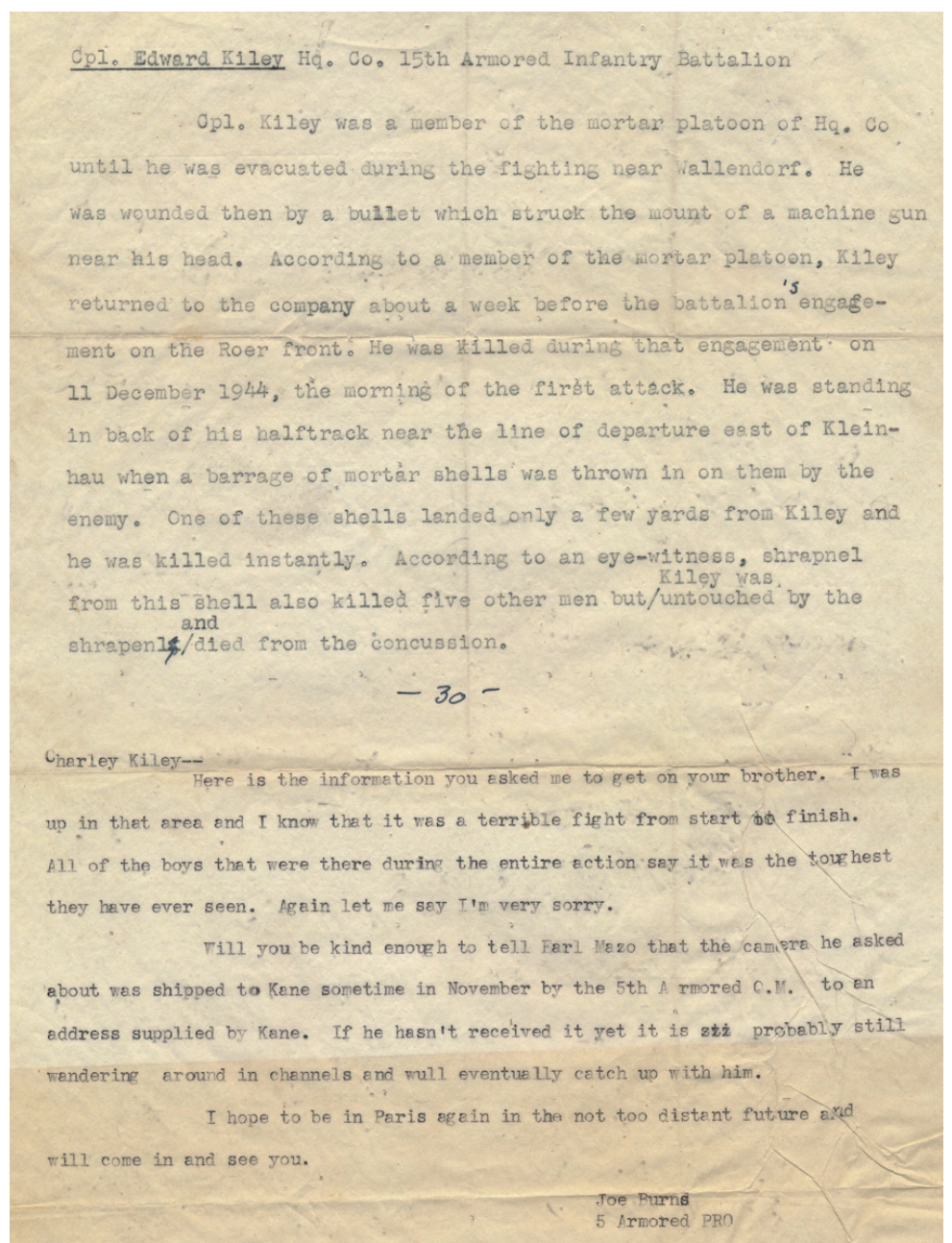
Evening Sweetheart

Today was like old times with the mailman. No letters, but Paris shipped up some packages for us and there was one for me from you. The first.

The gloves are super-swell. When I say I need them badly, I'm making a terrific understatement. I borrowed a pair of GI wool gloves from Morrow before I left Paris. That's how bad off I was. Now, you come to the rescue. The cigarettes... I don't know when I'll smoke all I have. The cheese, crackers, candy, etc. were right out of the world. Oops, almost forgot the deviled ham. And... Santa Claus. Almost felt like shedding a couple of tears when I saw that, sweetheart. But, I have it hanging from the light shade over my head here in the office. That way, I can just look up, see the little red man, and think of you.

While there were no letters from you in today's mail, I did get two (2) no less, from your big sister. One was dated Dec. 29 and the other Jan. 2. Looks like you have competition, darling.

I also received a report on Eddie's death today. I contacted the public relations



Report on Eddie's death.

officer of the 5th Armored and asked him to find out what he could. He couldn't find out where Ed is buried, which is what I wanted to know most of all. But here is the report he got for me.

“Cpl. Kiley was a member of a mortar platoon until he was evacuated during the fighting near Wallendorf in September. He was wounded at the time by a bullet which struck the mount of a machine gun near his head. According to one of the men in Kiley's platoon, he returned to the outfit about a week before the battalion was committed to action on the Roer front. He was killed during that engagement on Dec. 11, the morning of the first attack. He was standing in back of his halftrack near the line of departure east of Klenhau when a barrage of mortar shells was thrown in on them by the enemy. One of these shells landed only a few yards from Kiley and he was killed instantly. According to an eye-witness, shrapnel from the shells also killed five other men but did not touch Kiley. He died from the concussion.”

So, there it is, hon. They say it was pretty tough up there at the time and I can well believe it. I'm sending the original report of this to John. I think it's best not to let Pop see it. In any case, I'll let John use his best judgment.

We're all ready to go to press tomorrow night and things don't look bad. Gen. Solbert, top boss of Information and Special Service in the ETO, is upcoming for the opener so it looks like I'll have to shave. Nothing like letting your beard grow and look like a mountaineer up here. I'll be back tomorrow.

'Night...

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles



Joe Fleming. New York 1945.

January 18, 1945—New York

Darling,

Joe is here and says he will forward this to you via the Liege packet.

This way it seems a little more personal, doesn't it?

We are just sitting around talking mostly *Stars and Stripes* talk. Seems as if you just have to be here. We are still awaiting word from Earl. Rita is getting impatient.

We had some super waffles tonight. Jane is the expert in that department. Joe ate one whole one so we should be flattered.

I'm sorry I was so low yesterday and last night when I wrote. I missed you so. Will you 'scuse Mrs. K. please? I'll do better, believe me. Just

one of those days... our anniversary and all.

Today dawned beautiful and clear and even if I didn't get a letter I feel much better.

Joe tells me you started to print yesterday. I'm anxious to hear about it all.

The most recent news I have is the Russian deal. I'll go over that again, just in case this reaches you before the other letter.

I was surprised I never thought of that. The opportunity sounds wonderful and you should make the most of it, but you will know what to do.

Just so it doesn't prolong your return home, that's what concerns me... that and the fact I want you to be all right. I can see after thinking about it what a marvelous opportunity it is. I must admit, the first shock was almost a little too much but after thinking about it I know that it is a colossal chance.

I'm more than happy you weren't tagged for the Pacific. I think that would have sent me.

I'd better go back to the circle but I'll be back... maybe a bit later tonight.

I love you so, so much and miss you, oh more and more and more. Be careful and keep well.

All my love and kisses, always and your Billee

January 19, 1945—New York

Darling,

A recent letter, written January 4, was waiting for me this a.m.

I've amazed Rita and Jane with my lengthy letters to you. Seems as if I write reams but if you want more, hon, you shall have. Personally, I think you're teasing me just to see what I'll say.

As for Dec. 23, I remember distinctly that Mrs. K. was very much under the weather. The cold she had during the holidays was at its peak. Jane and I worked pretty hard in the apartment that day then, I remember, that was the night I trimmed the Christmas tree and wrapped a few packages I had left 'til the last minute. I wrote to you, I'm sure. I know I did and went to bed rather late. Why???

I'll bet the New York bureau reported leaving a package on the previous night and I wasn't at home. Instead, I was at 195 taking some things to El for the weekend... all accounted for, hon. What kind of idea have you had, you devil? Teasing me again! I should have said, "None of your business," and made you wonder but I'm a good wife and will tell all.

I got confused on the numbering deal. I can safely say that I have neglected writing you only five times. Three times I know of and the other two, not sure. Couldn't remember the last number. With a bit of figuring I can start over.

Jane, Brad and I went to see "Le Vie Parisienne," a musical at the Center Theatre. The musical had a couple of naughty songs in it and a few cancan girls to add the risque touch. The setting was the Gay Nineties in Paris, being invaded by some wealthy Americans. The music was very gay, the plot

fair, the cast just so-so. I've seen better in Asheville, but I enjoyed it. Pretty good, but not nearly as good as the "Folies Bergere," I'm sure.

Speaking of the "Folies," I thought you were a newspaper man. Enclosed is a story about your "tall, gorgeous but naked mlle." How come you didn't go after the story? Jane read it as it came off the UP wires and it was unprintable... modified quite a bit to use in the news. I thought you'd be interested. A strip-tease Olympics should sit on the sports page, don't you think?

Bud will undoubtedly hit New York before the Pacific. You didn't mention who might be accompanying him. Someone who is already here? Is he going to cover the Air Force? Will it be the Philippines or Saipan?

I called Father John about the Russian deal. He was surprised... he laughed and said, "We'd have a Communist on our hands," then wondered why a guy named Kiley should be so honored.

I can see, darling, what a super assignment it would be. I can see how you are reacting to it. At the rate they're going, you can probably cover the story in Berlin. I'm terribly anxious to hear more of the details. Evidently none of all this is known in the bureau here, because Joe didn't mention it at all last night.

Mrs. K. bought some very glamorous shoes today but she's leaving them in the box with a look now and then until Mr. K. can appreciate them.

The windows finally were washed today and we can see out. What a difference it makes. I had no idea they were so, so dirty.

By this time you should know the \$100.00 was received.

Oh, speaking of money... the bond department has a new system. They don't issue bonds until they receive a bit each month from the finance officer you are under, so consequently, they are not coming through in a regular fashion as before. I received October's but not September's and none since. The October [one] was written Dec. 11 so you can see how far behind they must be. Perhaps if you are changing them that would cause a delay on the later ones.

Will you stop apologizing for my Christmas and birthday gifts? I never had a nicer holiday except I missed you so, so terribly... just as I am now, but how you showered me with gifts. You're spoiling me, for I'm not accustomed to a lot of attention. But I'm loving it.

Darling, is it good to miss you this way? I do so, so much, as much as you are missing me, I know.

My heart is so filled with all the little things we did together. I miss so not seeing you on the other side of the table. On the buses, no one to hold my hand, and I miss not seeing your face buried in a paper. Sometimes I used to get jealous of the old paper... when I wanted to talk, but I kept still, and loved watching you.

It's still so wonderful, darling, that we get along so well together in every way. There must be something wrong because I can't find a thing to complain about, then. Now I just have that "miss you" feeling like a disease almost.

You have to tuck me in, darling. I'm so, so tired and tomorrow is another day at Time.

I love you so, so much and I'm not "MISBEHAVIN.'" You'd better not because I'll find a way to check. Teasing you, darling, just as you did. I love you.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

January 20, 1945—New York

Darling,

Another Saturday to cross off the calendar. I'm wondering where you are tonight... asleep by now or just getting ready to, maybe... it's after one a.m. now.



Toots Shore's was a famous New York night spot during the 1940s and 50s, located at 51 West 51st Street and drawing many celebrities to its circular bar. It was used as a location for the 1957 film "Sweet Smell of Success."

We were gadabouts tonight. Andy was simply wonderful... took Jane, Rita, Libby and me to dinner with he and Marg at Toots Shore's and then to a newsreel. He was sweet. We all wanted to pay our own checks. After a bit of fussing he settled it with... "You all don't mean a damn to me, but your husbands are my best friends." Also he added that maybe he could like us eventually. Can't you see that?

Marg is staying on in New York... at the present is looking for someone to live with her. She has an apartment in mind... suggested that we move in with her. It's a large apartment.

Libby and Rita are on pins and needles waiting. Of course, Libby is quite surprised at seeing Morrow so soon. We walked down Broadway after we left Andy and Rita and were pushed around quite a bit. We stopped in the Brass Rail and had a drink, and watched the crowds come in and out. That's really a place. You'll laugh, hon, but I forgot where the darn place was so I saw a nice friendly policeman a couple of blocks away. I approached him and before I could say anything, he wanted to know if we were lost. I think I surprised him a little with my query about the Brass Rail. Honestly, I don't think he wanted to tell me. Do you suppose he thought we were out for no good?

There wasn't anything wrong, was there, hon? If you'd rather I didn't do things like that I won't. I'd rather go to a wide open place than one on a side street if I go.

Bing is singing our Irish lullaby. That'll always remind me of you... always.

Andy talked to Steve Slesinger on the phone from California and he's working on the deal. Couldn't tell me anything else. He seems to think he's an all right guy.

We've been reading the Sunday papers since we're home. I have my shower all over with and now I'm in the alcove... my private sitting room... attired in your pajamas. They are so comfortable, hon, and they belong to you. Guess that's why I like them.

The newsreel was excellent tonight. The Philippines and the German counter-offensive. They give you an awful, awful helpless feeling inside.

I went to St. Patrick's tonight after work to Confession, so I'm going to an early Mass. It will be for us, darling. Had a lovely feeling of being so close to you, kneeling tonight before I went to Confession. Sometimes I don't feel that but this was one of the times I did. You were so close. Those memories of our kneeling together each night... I remember one night you were kneeling on the other side of our bed at 309. I opened my eyes after finishing my prayer. You were still kneeling but evidently had been watching me. You had such a tender look, darling... a bit thoughtful... I knew you must have been thinking about me. That isn't taking too much for granted. Somehow, I knew it was me. I loved you so... didn't want to let a second of that moment escape. I've said before I have so many little memories that keep coming up in the day. Something happens to remind me always. I remember one morning I was in the cross town bus... late as usual... you and Benny were at the news stand. You didn't know I was anywhere around. I just sat, loving you, so proud knowing that I belonged to you. Then you disappeared down the subway stairs.



*Charles at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, taken on their honeymoon.
August 1944.*

I loved meeting you on the corner for lunch. Some of the girls in the office must have seen us because they all tell me how nice you are. I know so well how nice you are, darling, but I sort of glow when someone else tells me.

Will you let me know via E.F.M. messages if you ever need money. Please, hon. I see that you can send them again.

I've done so much gadding this week I haven't been able to do a thing for myself. After Monday, I'm settling down. I don't like this night-life without you, darling. Not a bit. I just don't like going out without you. Funny how you can change your whole life over in a couple of months. I never minded going about alone before, when you were gone, but now it's different. Oh, nearly forgot, Andy and Marg spent three days in Asheville, and called Mom but she's still in Ohio.

Seems to be all for tonight, my dearest. You just have to tuck me in. I'm sleepy now. Could snuggle up on your shoulder so easily. Kiss me goodnight... love me, and miss me.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your sweetheart

January 21, 1945—New York

Darling,

The thought just occurred... remember three years ago, I was receiving my first letters from you? I don't remember, did I answer that week? I can almost quote your letter... the first one. I'll never forget my surprise. I wonder how many miles of writing we've covered. Must be thousands.

We've been loafing around all day. Early today Rita received word that Earl had left so she was able to get a hotel room and moved in.

The sun was so bright that Jane and I decided to walk. Took a subway to 50th and walked up to 68th on Madison, stopping now and then to look in shop windows. We didn't see anything we'd like to have. Walked back to 53rd and decided to eat before we went home.



Did you ever eat English kippers? I should have known they'd be herrings. Darn, but we wondered what they could be. All I've done since is drink water.

We got home and somehow or other the prospect of staying in didn't attract us and out we went again, to the neighborhood movie to see "Mrs. Parkington." Really a swell picture, hon, but one of those you almost have to have read the story. Fortunately, both Jane and I had so we enjoyed it very much. It's one of the best... far, far superior to "Madame Curie."

The weather is clearing. I hope all the snow leaves. You must be wishing that, too. I'm anxious to get mail from Liege so that I know what kind of setup you have.

Tomorrow is the day I go to the blood donor place and I sincerely hope I won't be rejected this time. Tomorrow night

I go to see "One Touch of Venus" with El and Mrs. O'Connor. We plan to go to the Spanish place for dinner.

The Russian offensive is welcome. A hope and pray this will take a few months off the waiting, on both sides.

We saw newsreels last night and tonight. Tonight, instead of a double feature, they had "Brought to Action," the actual pictures of the Philippine sea battles. Most amazing pictures I ever saw. You will probably see them over there.

I'm wondering if Bud will go to the Pacific via the states. I get impatient waiting for the mail.

Andy said he had talked to Slesinger several times long-distance about something else but asked about our deal and he said he was working on it. Perhaps I told you last night. I was a bit sleepy when I got home, so 'scuse the repetition please, Mr. K.

Having Earl and Morrow coming home shortens the distance between us, darling. Do you think it's wrong to be a bit envious and not wanting to be around them? We've had our day I know, but I'm a bit selfish.

You would have laughed at Jane. She's never been around a Southern gal. Rita is definitely Southern and one of the helpless type... but much better than the majority I know. She did help herself some. I know any number at home that don't do anything but dress themselves. She's very nice. I like her a lot and Jane did, too; she just wasn't used to her being Southern and a little slow.

I wonder sometimes about these mixed marriages. Southern and Northern. Say what you will there is a lot of difference. I'm glad of my sort of gypsy youth. At least I have a little of both sides.

Darling, I've missed you so. Last night in the newsreel... this morning you were waiting at the altar rail. I do find you so close there. There was a couple there celebrating their 25th anniversary. They renewed their vows after the Mass and the recessional was played again for them. A Spanish couple... she was all dressed up in her Sunday best, resplendent with a corsage of roses. They looked so happy... a nice custom.

I think we were both missing you all so today, at least our words seemed to agree that we wanted to stay out today. A couple of escapists but I think it's all in being around Libby and Rita, knowing they are going to have a little of what we shared.

Jane laughed at me tonight, I looked so funny in your pajamas and my hair pinned up... washed it tonight. I look terribly unglamorous. Think you could take tucking me in tonight in this getup?

This letter isn't very newsy... except I miss you so, so much and want so much to have you around, for maybe just 5 minutes, so I can see for myself that you are all right and well.

I'd better be tucked in early tonight... see if I can get in an extra 40 winks. Goodnight. My goodnight kiss in the corner here [with arrow] and no makeup on. I love you, darling.

All my love and kisses, always
Your Billee

January 21, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

I'm worried tonight. I really am. To relieve the worryment I'll have to hear you say you understand why my mail hasn't been as regular as it used to be when I was a-courtin' Miz Billee Ruth Marie Gray.

When I last wrote Thursday night I firmly resolved to write at least something every day. I was never more resolved on anything, realizing only too well that I have been lax since I came back.

In Paris, I wrote faithfully, until the three trips to Liege caused me to stop writing while I was away. Now, here, the situation is something different. We are working from shortly after noon until after midnight. I thoroughly enjoy the work, too, darling. But, I'm so damn weary when I finish that the only thing that appeals to me is the crib. I doubt if I could write more than a few lines. I'm at the desk from 1 p.m. until about 8 (with time out for dinner) then go downstairs and make up two pages. That brings me up to about 11:30 or 12.

My resolution to write every day may not carry though but I'll be with you just as often as I possibly can, sweetheart. Sometimes, I hope, it will be every day. Other times it may be longer. But, please, sweetheart, don't think for a second that because the volume of my mail has dwindled that I have lost even the slightest speck of love and devotion for you. I don't know why I'm thinking these things but I feel awfully guilty.

I went to church in the Liege Cathedral today, and actually had to keep my gloves on, it was that cold. I have never seen this before, either... The bishop wore a small, black skull cap during the Mass, removing it only for the Consecration. He also wore black wool mittens with the fingers cut off. Naturally, there wasn't a degree of heat in the church and the temperature here now is about three above zero. There is plenty of blanche neige (white snow, to you, madam) but I don't mind it a bit, honestly. We have plenty of heat in the office (which, incidentally, is more modern by far than the London and Paris offices are) and in the hotel where we live. Moreover, I have lots of heavy underwear, wool shirts, wool socks, flannel 'jamas, four different kinds of jackets, and an officer's combination weather coat which I bought in Paris. So, you see I'm just a warm little butterball.



Interior of Liege Cathedral. I doubt the chairs were there in 1945... you probably had to stand.

Angel, they did it to me again. The coiffeur, I mean. Just like they did in Carentan, before I came home. Not quite as bad, maybe, but my hair sure took a beating. I went to the barber yesterday for a haircut and shampoo. Because I had a cold sore under my nose I hadn't shaved my lip for a week and got a shave, too. I tried to make the barber understand that I merely wanted him to be careful when he shaved my lip but he thought I wanted him to trim a mustache and you should see what he left. Gad, I looked like Ronald Colman... one of those thin, straight lines between my upper lip and nose. What he did to my hair with the shears also shouldn't happen to a dog.

My only hope is that in a few weeks my hair will look like something again. Oh, don't worry, I took care of that Colman misplaced eyebrow five minutes after I left the barber chair by removing it with my own razor.

Gen. Solbert showed up yesterday and said we were doing "a great job," which doesn't mean a damn thing, coming from somebody who doesn't know a newspaper from a three-base hit. Still, it was nice having company.



Stars and Stripes Liege office and staff. Charles is second from left, seated. Note the typewriters. Liege, Belgium, January 1945.

(I'd like to break in at this point and tell you I'm having crackers and cheese with a thermos of coffee. Mmmmm, tasty midnight snack, too.)

I talked with Benny on the phone between here and Paris tonight. He said his mail is not so hot; slow delivery, mainly. I asked him if there was any news on the cable line and he said there wasn't. By the way, I believe I acknowledged your last cable via RCA or however you sent it, but in case I

didn't in the rush to get up here, I'll do it now. It was thoughtful, angel. Or, should I say, just like Billee?

Gotta go now. If I'm not back again tomorrow... well, I won't say a word if you don't come over to my house. How's that?

If you snuggle up in your blankets, I'll tuck you in with three kisses.

'Night, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

PS: Please send toothpaste, stationery and cigarettes.

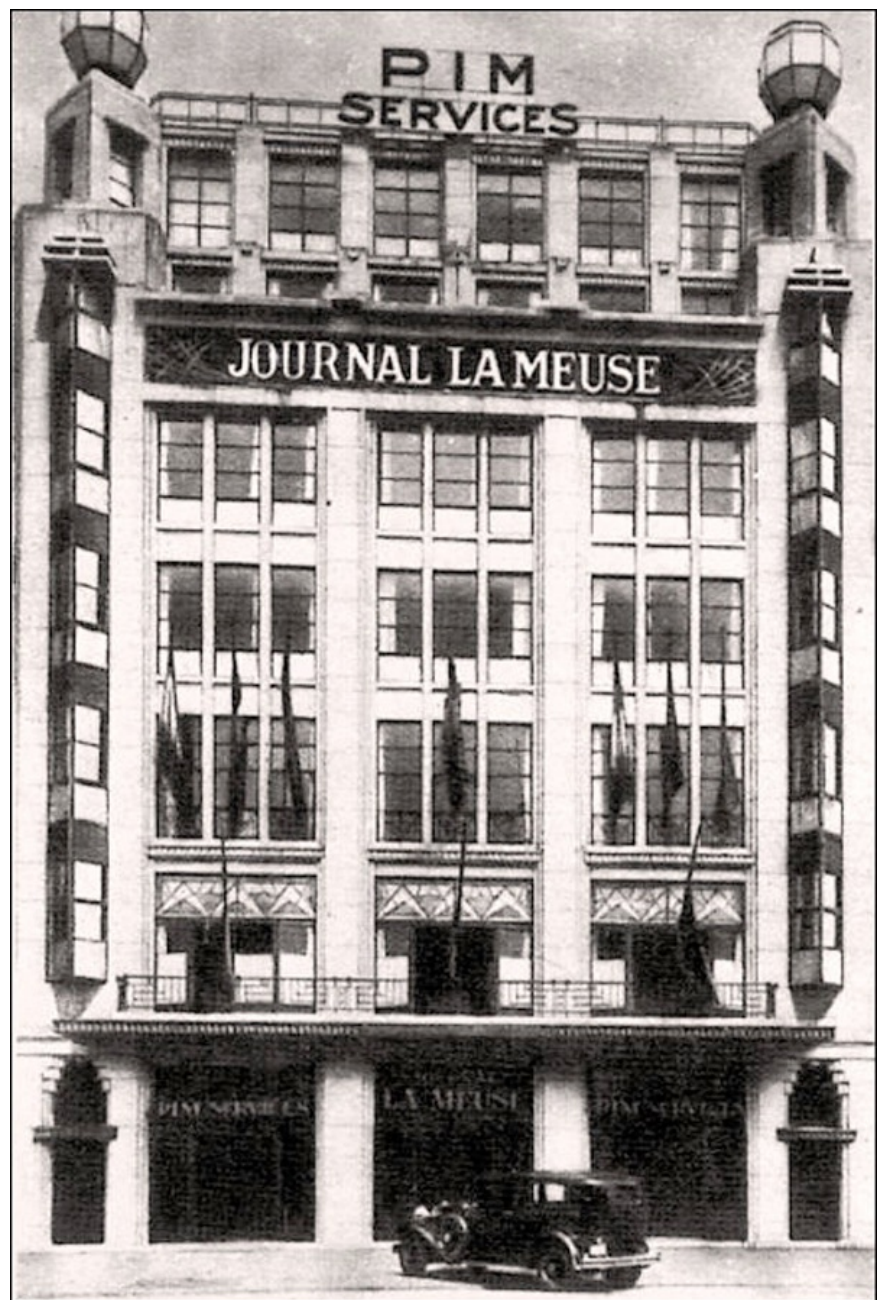
January 22, 1945—Liege

Dear Ray,

This is my first letter to you in about a month, I think, and there is a lot I have to say to you. First, my mail will probably be slower than usual in coming home but it will be because I'm wrapped up in this new job so much I have darn little time to write. Even Billee has been neglected, believe me. still, while I'm putting in 12 or 13 hours a day and staying busy, I like it. Apparently, everybody's mail is slow getting home these days, so I shouldn't kick too much.

I've been up here for almost a week now... sports and city editor of the Liege edition. We are servicing First and Ninth Armies while Paris handles Third Army and rear echelon units back to Paris and beyond. Our circulation and that of Paris is about the same. The edition in Nancy, France, (which was started by the Mediterranean Stars and Stripes but which, with editions in Marseilles and Digon, were absorbed by us a couple of weeks ago) is servicing Seventh Army and shortly will handle Third, too.

We are publishing from the plant of La Meuse, a Liege newspaper owned by a man who supervises a chain in France and Belgium. It is a more modern plant than London or Paris but we do not have the ideal facilities they have, such as English-speaking workmen, type faces,



*La Meuse building, circa 1920, as it must have looked in 1945.
It has since been demolished.*

size of rotary presses for a better and bigger paper than we have. But it's going to be a lot of fun, believe me. I'm working like a mule, putting out the sports page by myself, swinging the whip at our guys in the field and supervising copy emanating from Army sources.

We are billeted in a fairly good hotel (heat but no hot water with a Turkish bath next door), use a restaurant next door to the office for our mess (we supply the food, they do the rest). The only trouble comes from buzz bombs (don't ever say a word to Billee or 195 since I've told them it was home cooking up here) and they don't bother me particularly. I'll have to wait until after I get back to tell you the real story of the b[om]bing of this place.

Alors (which means "now then," in French):

I have a report on Eddie's death, sent to me by the Fifth Armored PRC whom I asked to get it for me. I am enclosing it in this and you can judge for yourself. He said he would try to find out where Ed is buried but apparently was not able to do so. Meanwhile, I'll keep on trying. You can also use your judgment on whether or not to show it to Pop. I won't say anything about it.

By now, you should have the letter re the Hollywood offer for my Molotoff story. The latest word I've had from Rooney is that Slesinger said he would take care of it. If something has not been done or said by the time you get this, write immediately to the people and tell them you will handle the business. Give them permission to buy and for the love of Pete take 15 cents for it if you can get it so I can have it off my mind. If you get more than 15 cents, I hereby willingly contribute it to the Blessed Sacrament A.A. fund.

I'm saving copies of the Paris and Liege papers and when I get a chance to breathe, I'll send them along for binding. Are you still getting the London rag? so far nothing more has developed on me going to Russia and I doubt if it ever will. The last word that I had was that a Russian delegate for the Red Army in Paris was passing it through channels.

Regards to all. Temperature here now is 3 above, with more snow than I've ever seen. But, I'm healthy, not too wealthy and wiser than I was three years ago. 'Bye.

K.

January 22, 1945—New York

Darling,

Earl arrived this a.m. but I didn't see him... about 6:30 I guess. Jane heard the doorbell first. Since I had washed my hair last night and was all pinned up (only you have the privilege of seeing Mrs. K. in that getup) I stayed out of sight while he called Rita at the hotel.

I'm so grateful she wasn't here. I don't think I could have taken a meeting like that. Any bitterness I'm trying not to have I know would rear its head. I'm not that unselfish about my feelings.

They talked to Jane today and we are to lunch with them Wednesday. He was so excited this a.m. He told Jane he had a package for me from Father John; then, rectified that error with "no, I mean Father Charles" which was nearly as bad.

He told Jane, too, that he was so anxious to meet me, that according to you I must be perfect. Now really, hon, you give me too much to live up to. How can I be that when I know my faults far exceed my virtues. I'm afraid he'll be disillusioned.

Too, he seemed to know all about the Russian deal and wanted me to know I shouldn't be concerned. I'm anxious to talk to him myself.

He said you were in charge of the field correspondents out of Liege, and doing makeup and sports. Sounds like a lot of work, darling. Tell me more.

I went to the blood bank this a.m. Feel fine and had a long talk with one of the women there. She said they need hospital staff assistants in the New York vicinity. I think it pays about \$150 a month. I called Jane and she called the employment officer. We have to go between 9-12 so that means a day off or wait 'til Monday. We'll see what happens.

Pop thinks I'm crazy for not taking the *Stars and Stripes* job. El was telling me tonight... I think my decision was the best and I'm not sorry.



I can't make up my mind whether or not I enjoyed "One Touch of Venus." The ballet was perfect in it but I was a bit disappointed in the rest. I did get four packs of cigarettes, though, for your box... three of them Chesterfields and one Old Gold, and a Hershey bar. I couldn't believe my eyes. Of course, they weren't at OPA prices. Only for you, darling, would I do that.

After the show we decided to have a drink somewhere... yes, the Brass Rail... and what do you think? I met two girls from home that I used to work with there. It's a small world, isn't it? El was amused at the accents.

Speaking of accents, Earl really has one, too. I'm anxious to see what you sent me, darling. I hope you weren't too extravagant. Perhaps we will know Wednesday.

I had a letter from Warren today, finally. He gets a 15-day furlough beginning Feb. 1st and asked if I would be here so perhaps he plans on spending part of it here. He has been assigned to radio maintenance... emergency work... seems to like it, too. His letter is a lot more cheerful than I hoped to get. He is anxious to hear news of you all.

Also, a letter from Mom arrived. She really makes me sweat those out. She's getting ready to go back home. I'm glad she was snowbound. At least she's had a nice enforced rest.

Lettie and Harry are to leave this week for Florida. Poor Lee doesn't want to go. Seems Harry has an asthma condition. They are renting their house and taking a place down there. He plans to work. His plant wouldn't give him a release, so I don't know how he will make out.

His brother, Tommy was forced down in the North Sea and is in a hospital in England suffering from exposure.

Forgot to tell you, I wasn't rejected this morning at the blood bank. I'm in 1A classification again... so I felt worthwhile being around.

Having Earl and Rita and Libby and Morrow together.. I miss you so, so much. You must have felt pretty much the same seeing them coming home.

I enjoyed tonight, but still I miss you so. Going out at night doesn't attract me any more, now that I can't be with you.

You know what I remembered? The couple of nights we sat in the bar across from the Lexington and drank scotch and sodas. We were alone those few days with no one bothering us. It was perfect. I'll always remember, too, with what ease we became Mr. and Mrs. K. I had always heard about these adjustments and allowances and giving up. I'm sorry, hon, but I haven't given anything up for you. Certainly my cup was and still is running over. As for adjustments... doesn't seem to have a place in my vocabulary. Could there be something wrong with us?

Tell me, hon, honestly... how did you feel? Did you have to make any allowances, adjustments or give anything up?

I remember Mom told me once what a sacrifice I was making to become a Catholic. I've never been able to discover what the sacrifice was. The same with you, darling. You just make my life for me. Now I feel nearly complete inside. The whole completion will be when I have you again, and when our pitcher puts in an appearance. Not that you aren't enough for me, darling. Don't ever think that... you know what I'm trying to say.

It's really the 23rd, darling, and nearly two months since we said our last goodbye to each other. Seems almost like two years, tonight. But I remember every instant, even the glass of water you let me have. Tuck me in, before I fall asleep. I'm missing you so, so much. Love me always and miss me. I love you. Goodnight, dearest.

All my love and kisses always, your Billee

January 22, 1945—Liege

Evening sweetheart,

I made that promise last night to be around to see you and here I am, right on time. It is easy to see you are looking beautiful, as usual. Your hair is done very nice tonight, ma cherie. I like your silk blouse, too. Mmmmmm, that scent in your hair. Give me one guess... Heure Intime, yes... no? And now, if you don't mind... here I've been standing for five minutes, admiring you, telling you how

beautiful you are, loving you to pieces and you haven't given me permission to kiss you yet. You wouldn't be playing hard to get, would you?

Your long, long letter of Jan. 3, replete with lipstick kiss on the back, came today. I didn't know I sounded as low as I must have in some of those letters I wrote last month. At the time, I guess I was down pretty much. But, the situation has changed a great deal for the better now, thank heavens. First, let me get that off my chest.

Apparently the Russian deal never will develop. As I said in a previous letter, the last word before I left Paris was that the deal was in the hands of the Russians now, but there was not even the slightest bit of action expected on it for quite a while. And, speaking of Russia, wouldn't I love to be with them these days... 135 miles from Berlin, the wires say tonight.

So, with Russia cooled off for me, I'll be here indefinitely. I've been as happy these last few days than I've ever been with the paper. I'm doing work in which I'm interested, we have a good team up here and all nice fellows. Because we are 230 miles from Paris there isn't any brass hanging around our necks or any petty politics going on in the background. The work is hard, the hours are long, but I'm thriving on it.

Benny is browned off with the paper, at last report. He is working with Bob on the News Bureau which has been established in Paris and when I left he intimated he would try to get a transfer to Army News Service in New York. Whether or not he has changed his mind, I don't know. At any rate, don't mention it to Jane unless he has told her.

About the Molotoff business. I wrote to John last night and asked him, if nothing had been done by the time he got my letter, to try and contact the people and get rid of the damn story for 15 cents if necessary, and anything over that which they were willing to pay will gladly be contributed to the Blessed Sacrament A.A. Fund. Just so I can get it off my mind.

I'll take care of Rooney when he gets back here about making cracks. If he can get peeved because he is asked to make a phone call or two or use that cable service for what you used it, I can punch him in the eye and take a great deal of delight in doing it. We won't say any more about it, but if he can't give me a reasonable explanation I'm guaranteeing you now, Mr. Rooney and I are going to part company... and not too friendly at that. I seldom boil over but that's got me stopped—ice cold.

'Bye for now, angel... 'night, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

January 23, 1945—New York

My dearest little baby,

Surprised? I feel like calling you "little baby" tonight. I miss you... no mail yesterday, today or since the early part of last week. You know how I feel now.

You would have been amused at Jane and me. Neither of us had any mail. We made a stab at supper, then relaxed in the living room. Our chins kept getting lower. Finally, we worked ourselves out of it by fixing up boxes for you both.

The four packs of cigarettes I bought at the theatre, some stationery, last couple of issues of "Time," cheese and crackers, olives and chocolate bars and candy. Oh, don't forget to keep sending me requests, so I don't have to wait when I can get cigarettes to send.

I talked to Earl on the phone tonight and he delivered your love. That's a heck of a way to get it. We are all meeting at the English Grill... the Rooneys and Mazos, Mrs. Price and Mrs. Kiley. I might even take more than an hour of Times' time. He is going to deliver your package also. I hope there's a letter inside... I hope.

Joe said he got word from Benny to buy Bud a typewriter and have it ready, so I guess he'll be in soon on his way to the Pacific. You didn't say but is his going laying the groundwork for a Pacific edition, or is it strictly field reporting?

Earl seems to know all about the Russian deal, so it will be all right if I ask questions. He sounds like a regular guy.

I've written two long letters this evening. One to Mom, one to Warren, and now you. I save you 'til last because you have to tuck me in.

Sometimes "over there" doesn't seem very far away but tonight it seems as if it were the end of the world.

I should be optimistic. The Russians are going as if they will reach Berlin first. I hope they do, too. You wait long enough, then, and you'll only have to go to Berlin to report on them.

You know what I did tonight? Stood on my head. I've been wondering for a long time if I still could and what do you know? I can.

I was amusing Jane tonight after my shower with very fancy and extreme hair-dos. Had it all up on top, and all different ways. To add to the picture, I was attired in your blue striped p.j.s which made me all the more ridiculous-looking.

By this time, you must think I've reached the slap-happy stage. Really, hon, I'm perfectly all right... just missing you.

Rita and Earl are to go to Charleston Thursday. The welcome mat will really be out for them. I hope they have a lot of time to themselves, though.

Libby and Morrow will probably go and see his mother in West Virginia. According to Libby it takes everything in the bank to get there... including a mule.

For a while today there was a nice touch of spring in the air. It was really nice at noon, then it all clouded again.

Two months today, darling, since I saw you last. It seems so much longer and yet it's all so vivid... that day. The last look I had was seeing you in the back of the bus. I wasn't sure then that was the last time.

Darling, I don't want to budge from here. I'm going to be right here when you come home. Just think, you were here two whole days before I saw you. Those days are all so precious now that I'm sorry for every one we weren't together. The ten in St. Louis makes twelve.

That was an awful ten days, darling. Ten times worse than this. Seems as if being in the states, we had to be together. I did my share of crying those days, too. I'll always remember the night you came in from the station... you were home again.

The waiting now I know must be, and you adjust yourself to it, or try to. Of course, you have good and bad days but you go on. It gets tough when the mail gets held up, as now, and the ache gets a little worse than usual. You say, tomorrow there'll be a letter... there's always tomorrow waiting.

Jane says hello and is going to write you a note very soon.

We get along awfully well, considering we're so different. I get annoyed now and then as she must but we do swell together. Having so much in common makes the big difference. It would be awful living with an outsider. We're both good at this "miss you" business, but both of us know we can't break down in front of the other so we do our best to not let it get us.

Darling, I'm so, so sleepy. Would you tuck me in now... nice.... you're so wonderful. Did I tell you today? And I love you more and more. Keep well and love me ever so much and miss me as much.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

January 24, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

Big day today. Yes, ma'am. One letter by regular air mail and another in the envelope from New York. Like old times, too, with Valentine Day cards (no less) from El and Annice, a belated Christmas card from my Aunt Jo in Denver and another from "Ernie, Dot and Jeanette" in Asheville. I've been trying to think who they are but the only Ernie I can remember was Ernie Blumenthal (that right?) in Massillon. Then, there was a very nice letter from Cecile Kramer, the gal from Harry Sherman Productions, who wrote, in part:

"When your agent, Mr. Slesinger, phoned I told him I'd ask Mr. Sherman about a deal. The latter informed me he simply wanted the idea for future use and that it was worth only \$50 or \$100... The upshot of it was your agent became highly insulted and sarcastic, reminding me that some studios paid thousands and thousands for ideas... He said it would be an insult to offer you such a paltry sum... We are not a major studio... I have discussed the matter further with Mr. Sherman and I know he would pay you up to \$200... If you should be interested, please let me know."

Now, I don't know what the hell to do. Apparently, Slesinger left them with the impression the deal was off. Right now I'd take what I could for it, inasmuch as nobody else is killing himself trying to get it.

Tell you what I'll do. You try to get in touch with Slesinger. I don't know where you could get him but Farrar and Rinehart might know [publisher of "Air Gunner" and "The Story of the Stars and Stripes"]. See what he says and if he is trying to unload the story on someone else, okay. If he isn't, you get in touch with Sherman (Cecile Kramer, Harry Sherman Productions, 5255 Clinton St., Los Angeles) and give them permission to use the damn story for wallpaper if they want to... for \$300. If they come back with a \$200 limit, take it, okay?

So much for outside business. Let's have a real, old-fashioned necking party, huh? Good and cold for it, too. Let's get in front of a big fireplace, with you stretched out and your head in my lap for a change.

The letter that came via regular mail was dated Jan. 9 and included the Christmas pictures of you and Jane. The letter was a nice long one, too, full of just about everything to make me feel good. I like the way you talk of missing little things that belong to us, calling Jane during the day, stretching out with my robe and 'jamas... oh, just about everything.

I'm going to say goodnight, in the middle of everything, angel... I'll have lots more to say tomorrow. 'Night, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

January 24, 1945—New York

Darling,

It's so, so cold tonight. One of the coldest nights yet. You wouldn't disown me, would you, for going over to 195 in my slacks? It's so much warmer that way and no one sees me. Pop said I was being sensible.

Today was the luncheon with the Mazos and the Rooneys. Hon, it was the next best thing to seeing you. Earl saw you on Saturday and this is Thursday. I asked him a million questions and he obliged me with all the answers. Kept calling me "child." He's a regular guy and I like him. When he comes back from Charleston, he wants to go over to 195 and spend the day, he says. He brought back the Stars and Stripes camera and film and he plans on taking pictures.

The perfume was a surprise. I'm going to keep it 'til you come home. It won't evaporate so long as the seal isn't broken. My first real perfume, hon... outside of the "L'Heure Intime." That's very special but I'll use it so long as it's opened. I'll remember the night you decided to smell nice... I'll remember all our intimate hours, darling.

The rosary beads are exactly what I had in mind, darling... perfect. It's what I've always wanted you to give me. The first opportunity I'll have, I'll deliver the others to Sister Gertrude Jose. I don't recall your telling me about her. Pop said she was a favorite of yours. El was telling me tonight, she

sent one of the kids from school around for your address this week. I know she'll be more than pleased with the gift.

Also I delivered the details about Eddie, that you told Earl. El still hasn't received the letter from Johnnie Ryan. Pop is well, darling, but he has a little older look about him since the news. I've noticed that. He's anxious to meet Earl.

We all ate in the English Grill... had the table next to the one we had that last Saturday night we were all together.

I was wondering about your reaction, being around these fellows coming back. It's as hard as seeing them together with their wives... grin and bear it is all we can do. I had an hour and a half lunch hour today. No one said anything when I went back, so I guess it's all right.

I had an idea to send you a flask, darling. Thought it would be handy to carry on those long trips. I was sure you showed me one at 195, but I couldn't find it tonight.

El wants me to come over and put a lot of your things in boxes. They are getting awfully dusty in the drawers. Eventually that will have to be done, so I may as well tend to it now. I did find a couple of pictures of you... one taken in 1940 of the Scofields and you. You looked so very young then. I wish so much I had known you that far back or before... that I had been one of the gang. I wish that you had been my first date.

Speaking of dates, Earl knows two boys that I went to school with. They live in the block above ours. Both of them went to Clemson the same time Earl did. In fact, one finished the same year. That would be John. He's a captain in the Signal Corps somewhere in Italy and was wounded in the Anzio beachhead. Nelson, the other, is in one of the armored divisions... a first lieutenant. It's a small world after all, isn't it?

I was more pleased to get the letters with the gifts today. At least one was fairly recent... that of January 14. I can stop looking for some every day because I know, since you are at Liege, you are terribly busy. Earl gave me the details on the setup you have so I know. It sounds like a lot of responsibility for you, but Earl said you liked it. Also he said living conditions in Liege were far superior to those in Paris.

Rita and Earl were so thoroughly happy to be together. I haven't met Morrow as yet. Really swell for him, he just had to come home and hang his hat up. He won't have to be concerned about hotels or apartments.

Mommy is so sleepy now, darling. Last night was one of those nights I had to read 'til the wee hours. I think I'll take my shower early in the evening so it doesn't wake me up so much when I'm ready to hit the sack.

Tuck me in, and kiss me nice. I love you, darling, more than you know and miss you even more.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

January 25, 1945—New York

Darling,

Another night nearly gone, darling, and another day without mail. Over a week now except the note that Earl brought.

I understand, though, that you're busy, and hearing from Earl how you were on Saturday last is wonderful, so I'm not too concerned. I just miss having the letters from you.

Jane traced down the record through CBS, and ended up with the managing editor of March of Time. I wrote but didn't get any results so she began calling friends at CBS. Tonight, I wrote a letter of request to Mr. Norris... we'll see what happens.

I talked to Father John tonight and told him the details about Eddie.

He would like very much for you to send him the Liege edition now. He says we don't have any interest in the London edition now, which is true. So darling, if it isn't too much trouble could you pack them up now and then and send these home for his file?

He went to see "Keys of the Kingdom" yesterday and enjoyed it, so maybe Sunday, I'll take Pop to see it. El and Bette are going to Long Island.

Tomorrow night I'm supposed to go to a bridge at the 77th Division club house with Marguerite. I'm not sure yet whether Jane is going.

Did you know Carl Kunzelman is in Paris for six months as part of the Army News service rotation plan? I think his wife is going to have a baby. We heard it via the grapevine. Jane is to see her in a few days.

It's colder than I've seen it in many a day... down to zero this a.m. That block from 7th to 6th was so, so long this morning. Thought I'd perish. No snow, or dampness, however... just darn cold.

I got called on the carpet this a.m. for being late. Takes too long to tell, darling, but she talked to me as if I were one of those sort of ordinary people that there are a few of there and I didn't like it, and told her so. I've been ten or fifteen minutes late a couple of times but was under the impression I was being docked for it so wasn't too concerned. I was informed today that I was being paid for it. I still don't feel as if I'm not doing my part, because my production is way up and I don't loaf during the day and run out for a cigarette every hour, so I'm not concerned. Won't be there too much longer anyway.



Had such a beautiful shower a bit ago and washed my hair. I have on my white p.j.s that you like and your robe, and I'm curled up in the yellow chair. Jane just went to bed, so I'll make this a short one tonight. I'm a bit weary myself. We stayed in and cleaned up around here and talked.

Had a letter from Mother Mueller today. She asked me to extend her sympathy for Eddie to you. She likes you very much and is quite pleased with my choice. She's a dear soul. I like her.

Remember how you ran up the stairs in front of me at 309 and would lock me out or else make me hunt for my key? I don't know how I happened to think of that. Must have been when I was looking for my key this evening.

It's amazing, isn't it, how much someone can mean in your life? So much has just stopped for me, and I just couldn't begin to be happy without you. Nothing is the same. I used to miss you before but I never dreamed it could be like this. I wouldn't have it any other way, however. I want that "miss you feeling" always around. Then I know you'll never be very far away.

I'm tired as usual. Will you tuck me in? I love you so, my darling... so, so much.

Be good, and take such good care of you for me. Goodnight.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

January 25, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

Let's you and I see what each other's lips taste like, huh? Nice big gloppy one, now. Mmmmm, goooooood.

I broke off rather abruptly last night, but picking up our conversation, re your letter of Jan. 9 (long, long one with the Christmas pix) and I don't know what I can do about Warren, hon. For one thing I haven't his address. You weren't very explicit on Mom's concern about him because of his "lack of responsibility." What's it all about? Give me the worst, if it is that bad, and I'll try to straighten him out, whatever it is.

So, little glamour-puss is crying for her lover again, is she? Seriously, sweetheart, I know what it is. When you told me you went to bed with tears in your eyes, well... those are the times I want to be where I can hold you and say it's all right. When I'm busy like I am now I don't have time to cry, but believe me my loneliness for you hasn't diminished even a little bit.

I'm glad you included razor blades and stationery in the package you mentioned, because I'm almost down to the bottom in blades and have been out of stationery for some time. Even this junk is running out... for which you are just as pleased, no doubt.

Hon, you mentioned having only nine letters from me. Holy cow. This is at least my 28th, and I'm sure I've skipped a couple which didn't have numbers. Still, we never had much luck with mail during the winter, have we?

In the middle of your Jan. 9 letter you suddenly start talking about your job, how you would like to keep it but doing different work, lots of rumors around the place, etc., but it doesn't make sense to me. Perhaps you talked about it in a previous letter and was sort of bringing me up to date.

By the way... in one of your recent letters you mentioned a Christmas card received from a WAC. I don't know why I suddenly remembered it now (I haven't a guilty conscience, believe me). In any case, that was the gal who I helped way back to write a few stories for a paper in Detroit. She heard I had gone home and simply sent the card there, I guess. I haven't seen her in about a year, at least, so for all I know she's still in England, or maybe she's home, I wouldn't know. Maybe it would be a good idea, though, for me to run an announcement of our marriage in the Stars and Stripes so the Women's Army Corps over here will leave me alone. Why, my dear, even here in Liege I find they have followed me from Paris. There are at least ten of them AWOL looking for me. (WACs are in Paris, Rheims and Versailles which is about 200 miles from here.)

I used to think I got tired at night back in New York. But, it was nothing compared to these nights. Right now I'm a weary old man. I try to think what it was I wanted to say to you... and I can't think. I try to keep at a letter and I start thinking what I should get up tonight for tomorrow's paper. That's bad, isn't it? Still, there isn't anything I can do about it... and it's not that I really mind, because I'm content with all the work.

I have three V-mails in my drawer that I haven't even read yet. They came this afternoon but all I could do was push them aside until I got a chance to look at them. I think one of them is from El, but I'm not even sure of that. I'll have a look when I tuck you in and kiss you goodnight.

And, now it's just about time for all little girls to be in bed, so climb in and Daddy'll do the honors.

'Night, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

January 26, 1945—New York

Darling,

Just a small "hello" tonight. Mrs. K. has had a busy day and evening. To explain:

Jane and I went to a card party at the 77th Division club house as guests of Marge. Her cousin is a member. Turned out to be a quiet, very homelike evening... something you'd do in Asheville or Massillon. I didn't think things like that went on in New York.

We played bunco and Mrs. K. won. Beginner's luck because I never win in things like that. I won three straight, throwing bunco. Isn't that something? The prize was a very practical Pyrex baking dish.

Marge's cousin's wife was chairman... really very nice, too. A good sort.

The same lament, darling... no mail again. Tomorrow!!!

I'm to go to 195 for the weekend, but Jane can't get anyone over to stay tomorrow night so I'll wait and go in the morning. There's no point in her spending a sleepless night when it isn't necessary.

It's still so, so very cold. I can't ever remember being as cold as I was yesterday and today. It's only a couple of degrees above zero.

Jane told me the other night she was getting tired of going to bed with me every night and I said, "Likewise," especially these cold nights, hon. You need someone to snuggle up to. I can't seem to think of anyone but you, somehow.

Did I tell you last night that I called Dot yesterday? I hadn't heard anything from them in so long and I was wondering how Berta was. So as not to interrupt a nap in the event Berta was resting, I called Dot. She's getting along fine... should be in about three weeks. Everyone at the Doyles and Daley's are well so that's good. I told them all the latest news about you.

El had a letter from Tom yesterday. He smashed his fingers. Didn't tell her how but he wasn't able to write for some little while and was afraid to get anyone else to write for fear of frightening her. He said he was all right now. He's on a patrol ship. They gave him a job ordering the fellows around since his accident, so he said he didn't have much to do.

You know what I was remembering today? Our meeting in Penn Station [just before they were married, when Charles first came back from overseas]. You know, when you weren't where you said you'd be? I was sure then and there you had changed your mind. Then, there you were. I never was whisked out of a station so fast in my life... breezed up to a hotel room just as if I was used to doing that. I didn't refuse, though, did I? At that stage of the game, darling, I'd have followed you anywhere.

That was an exciting day for Billee Gray and I think for a certain Sgt. Kiley. You know things happened so suddenly at the station and I was so excited... that all I remember is the cab... first seeing you then the cab. The ride is a little jumbled and then being rushed into the elevator. I do remember being propositioned before getting in the cab about my packing... what I had in the small bag, etc. A very subtle way, darling and I just ate it up. We certainly did some tall rushing, those first few but I loved every second... shopping with you and making arrangements... our little lists... no one ever had so much fun as we did. We're awfully special... did you know?

Mommy is so sleepy, darling. Could I maybe say goodnight and have you tuck me in? May I cuddle a little closer? It's so darn cold and you're always so nice and warm. I love you so, so very much. Goodnight, darling.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

January 28, 1945—New York

My darling,

Did you miss me last night? I missed you. It's the first Saturday night I haven't written to you, darling. Forgive me... then I'll tell you what happened.

As you know, I was to go to 195, but Jane couldn't get anyone to stay with her and she had made arrangements to see a play. Anyway, knowing Jane's little quirk about being alone I changed my plan to go to Jersey Sunday a.m.

I had visions of a nice quiet Saturday night... a little work, reading and a long letter to you... really, hon. I was looking forward to it. Right after I had just finished stewing some prunes for us next week, the Notleys came in and insisted on me dressing and going across to Felix's for a drink. I couldn't say no after their trekking all the way down here (I'm still amazed). One drink became three. I suggested we come back to 56, not being keen on the idea of covering the bars. We all came back and sat in the alcove drinking rye and sodas and eating pretzels. They had about three to my one and they kept getting a little more stiff. You know how Charlie gets... very quiet now and then blinking her eyes to assure you she is still conscious. Jack got terribly talkative. I think we discussed everything in the book.

The occasion was Jack's release from the Marines that became official yesterday. He's going to Phoenix to take a position there and Charlie will follow in a few weeks. They want us to be sure and pay them a visit... nice country and who knows!! They're a nice couple. I couldn't help but be a little amused. Finally poured them into elevator about two-thirty. I had left my laundry to soak so had to finish that. It became about three a.m. then, so I decided to tuck myself in. Anything that I could have written wouldn't have made sense.

I got up at eight this a.m. and went to Jersey. El and I went to 10:45 Mass and then paid Sister Gertrude Jose a visit. She's swell. I liked her immediately. She fairly peppered me with questions about you. She was so very pleased at your thoughtfulness. Also she rendered a few more of your escapades... one where you displayed your ability to do things the quickest way possible such as leaping up on the alter to remove the purple on Holy Saturday instead of getting something to stand on. When you did something wrong, you'd smile and she said they didn't have the heart to punish you, but it was for your own good. We were there nearly an hour.

Everyone at 195 is fine. El heard from Tom and she's very happy now. She hadn't heard in so long... only the one letter since he's back. He's living like a king on a patrol boat with a room of his own and lots of good things to eat.

The baby is so cute. How big she is getting, and she says so many words now. Marge Lynch was up this afternoon with her baby boy. Golly, what a baby. He's only two months old and he looks like a six-month-old baby. I had fun playing with him. He laughed and goo'd at me. He's like a magazine ad, he's so perfect.

Mom is home. I heard from Kay, and Lee and Harry are going to Asheville before they go to Florida. Kay and her husband are keeping an abandoned baby. The mother doesn't want him and the father is overseas... has never seen the baby but he won't sign the adoption papers. I don't know what will come of that.

It's a lot warmer, darling... thank goodness. I've never been colder than this past week.

Marge left me the loveliest white blouse yesterday morning with a happy birthday note on it. She does things like that. She's much too nice to me.

Last night, after Jane left and before the Notleys came in, I was sitting in the window seat looking up. The sky was lovely... full moon and stars and I wanted you so to be around somewhere near.

Jack was telling me about so many cases of infidelity in the Navy yard. It frightens me when I hear how lax people are with morals. So many cases among people who are married. I'm trying to believe that there are a lot of people like us, however. I feel sure there must be. The Notley's both wanted to be remembered. They thought you a pretty swell guy... of course, I didn't argue the point.

I had a brainstorm yesterday at work. I don't know whether it's a good idea or not. It's something that hasn't been done, I'm sure. I'm sure you are familiar with the poets' corner of the *Stars and Stripes*. Don't know whether or not you ever paid any particular attention to them. I always read them when I get the paper. Many times there was really something good. This is the idea... to go through the files for the best ones and make a collection. There never would be an opportunity like that again. Those poems have been written by fellows from all walks of life and most of them are about what they think in their own language. I'm probably not getting this across the way I want to but honestly, hon, I think it's a swell idea and should be done. Tell me what you think.

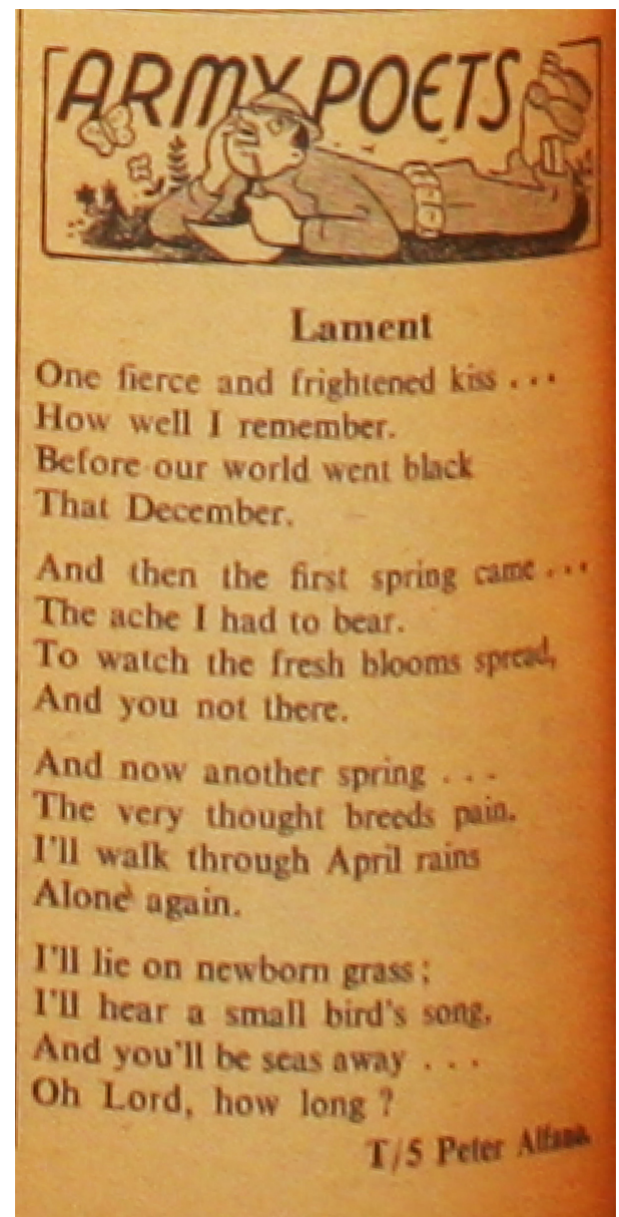
Did I tell you Pop is smoking a pipe? I came down stairs this evening and was greeted by a very unfamiliar smell... and there Pop was in his chair by the radio, puffing away on a discarded pipe of Tom's... The reason? Cigarette shortage.

Father John has found someone to bind the *Stars and Stripes*. I think he has written to you about the missing copies that probably you can supply.

El and I were busy today making post-war dreams. I hope you know how I feel about 195. I really feel like one of them. It's a good feeling to be welcomed there.

Jane and I are safe in the apartment 'til October, when the lease runs out. I don't know whether she will renew it or not. I'm kind of hoping by that time you'll be home or fixing to come home, but I'm not counting too much on it.

Ten years from now it will probably seem like such a short time out of our lives but now it seems so long... and I miss you so, so very much... but that's good, isn't it? Like you, the dreams aren't enough... a poor substitute for what we have for each other.



The Stars and Stripes had an "Army Poets" space filler in some editions; this example is typical.

Jane had dinner with Carl Kunzelman's wife today. The baby was a false alarm. She's staying on in New York. His tour of duty over there is only to be six months. How does that happen?

I'm stretched out on the sofa in slacks and jersey writing away. Jane is busy with the typewriter. Funny, somehow I can't write to you on a typewriter. Never seems to sound like me. I do a lot better this way. You'd probably appreciate a typed "date" so you could read it a little easier.

I seem to have covered all the news today. Am I forgiven for last night? That's nice. I kind of like you, Mr. K. You're such a nice guy even if you are my husband. After I have a shower you may tuck me in. I love you such a lot, darling. I think you sort of know it by now but I like reminding you. Goodnight, my darling. My prayers and all my love are with you every second. Keep very good care of you for me.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

January 28, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

Missed our date last night... bet you're steaming mad, too. I can just picture you standing there with your hands on your hips, eyes slanted and lips drawn to a thin line... asking, "Well, what's the excuse this time?"

All I can say, is that I was tired (stealing your stuff with that line) and hardly up to making love, like I am this morning. Why, a night's sleep leaves me absolutely devilish. Were you here now I'd be tempted to wrestle you all over the place.

I said you were steaming mad, because I know you kept your date, at least from my end. Yesterday's mail brought you right into the office in the form of your letter of Jan. 5. Lovely letter, too, darling.

You asked me if I'd mind shutting out all the world and being together for the night. No, I don't mind. In fact, you know me when it comes to being alone with you.

You also made yourself very clear on why you wanted to come over here. A little misunderstanding, again, too. I didn't mean you were looking forward to whatever adventure would come with such a trip, but a trip to Europe would be hard to deny anyone. And, I don't want to deny it to you, sweetheart. Just now (and it may change for the better) Paris, or any other place on the Continent, is not good. I can put up with the privation. I don't want you to do it. However, as I said, if you have angles... go right ahead and play them. You know, as well as I do, that there isn't anything I want more in this world than to be with you... in Paris, Liege, New York, Chungking, or Berlin.

I didn't get the full meaning of your list of social activities with the *Stars and Stripes*. I can't remember saying your social life should follow the standards of a convent. Gosh, hon, I'd be tickled to death if you were out every night in the week and twice on Sunday. I want you to have fun, even if I can't. I know our best fun is made together. But, please, because I'm over here and you are there doesn't mean I want you to lead a sheltered life. Have fun, darling, and all you can of it. I like to see you smile.

I haven't received your letter, re your talk with Slesinger and I'm anxious to hear about it 'cause it will enable me to make a decision on Molotov. If he has given it up, I'm going ahead and selling it for the \$200. I'll ask for \$300 but I doubt if I'll get it.

Tomorrow we go to eight pages, hon. I'll let you know how it goes. Meanwhile, I'm getting off the first batch of Liege editions to you and John. They will probably take some time getting there, but that's how it is.

'Bye for awhile.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

January 29, 1945—New York

My beloved,

Another day gone. It brought a long, rather amusing letter from Warren. I was surprised. He plans on coming here for a day or two of his leave before going home. I'm sending the letter on to you with a few footnotes added.

Jane went out tonight. I came home with a steak. Don't know yet how I happened to get it since the meat has been a little scarce. She had left a note that she wouldn't be in to dinner so I cut it in half and ate my part anyway... thinking of you all the time and wishing so hard you were on the other side of the table and we had our blue and white dishes out. Cleaned up the mess and should have ironed but I turned into an escapist and went to the movies at the corner. I saw an unusual picture: "Summer Storm," Linda Darnell and George Sanders. You may like it; then again, perhaps not. I rather liked it. The cast was small.



The other picture was a riot: "Three is a Family," taken from a Broadway play that was quite successful last year. It's worth seeing... really hilarious... a bit far-fetched but not too much so.

Do you remember telling me about meeting a girl at Bebe Daniels' that had escaped from a German concentration camp and made her way over the Pyrenees or the Alps or some range of mountains and eventually arrived in England? I remember you didn't seem to think her story quite probable. Red Mueller was telling Jane about this English girl he met who had a similar experience. She worked with the French Underground for eleven months. Her name is Edith Nicholson, better known as "Nicky." Mueller is terribly in love with her and wants to get married. This girl is supposed to have walked over the Pyrenees with another girl after they escaped from the prison. [Have not been able to verify this story.]

Jane had dinner with Red Mueller tonight and another couple of friends of his. Funny, darling... I have such a little disappointed feeling inside. She went out Saturday night to a play and a couple of places in the village with this communist that works in the news room. I know that it's all innocent, knowing Jane, but somehow it doesn't seem like her to be doing it. I have too old-fashioned ideas I guess, darling, but I couldn't enjoy sitting across a table for two in some restaurant and not seeing you... neither could I go to a show and sit with someone else. It would have to be you so we could hold hands. I just couldn't go through an evening like that in someone else's company... no matter how innocent it was. If it were someone we both knew very well then it would be different, but not casual acquaintances. Like going to dinner with the fellows from the paper and their wives... I don't mean that.

Don't say anything to Benny about Red Mueller because Jane hasn't written that to him yet. She'll write him tomorrow at the office.

Please, darling, I'm not being small-minded or catty. I don't mean to be if it sounds like that. I suppose it's being done every day but I'd rather not.

It's a magnificent night out. The sky is clear and the moon is high in the sky, and lots of stars. It was a blue Monday this a.m., both weather and me... no letter today. It's two weeks now since my last. I don't mind, hon, if you can't write long ones. Just a "Hello, I'm fine," and if you'll call me "sweetheart" I'll be so happy.

This Mueller discouraged Jane about going to France. He hold her a lot about the conditions and brought out a point she hadn't heard before but one that I've known for some time... that there is so much tuberculosis over there. That always follows in the wake of the course of war when people are deprived of the necessities of life.

Tomorrow night, I stay home and iron and do some odd jobs. Jane is having dinner with a girl from the office... Vandercook's secretary I think.

Tonight, I just couldn't have stayed in. I did so have the whim-whams and I'm missing you so, as usual. Somehow, nothing seems important without you, except our being together.

I'll say goodnight and let you tuck me in. I love you so. Goodnight, my dearest.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

January 30, 1945—New York

Darling,

You're no nice, my dearest. A letter was waiting for me this evening. I just couldn't believe it this morning when the little box downstairs didn't have that familiar airmail envelope. Jane had one from Benny, too.

The setup sounds interesting, darling. You're going to be awfully busy. I understand about not writing and don't mind me if I get a little impatient.

Too, I'm glad to hear about your living quarters and the Turkish bath... a nice substitute for no hot water. But tell me, hon (your curious wife), what did you mean when you said you could "bathe, etc." in the Turkish bath. What else do they do in a Turkish bath? [Charles' first letter to Billee about the Turkish bath has not been found.]

I'm paused for a few minutes to listen to the eleven o'clock news. Sounds good on all the fronts.

Jane had a drink with Joe, Hodenfield, and Carl tonight. She went down to put a note in for Benny. A cousin of hers was killed in France. Funny, he was killed on the 26th of December and his name was Eddie O'Leary. Also, he was with Patton.

Joe, bless him, told Jane he wanted to take us out to dinner but every time he could he was broke. I like him. Evidently Andy, Carl and Geblin are to go back Sunday. Joe said he wouldn't be surprised if the brass over there wouldn't be glad to get rid of you old *Stars and Stripes* men because of the policy you've tried to uphold, but that you have too many friends for them to do it. You haven't said much about it but then I know you sort of look on, rather than take part in the pro and con. I can imagine you are relieved to get out of the Paris office and all the politics. At least you'll be more or less on your own.

Joe said Bud should be in soon. Maybe he'll have some late news about you. Earl was so obliging about answering my questions.

We're all cleaned up tonight. My ironing is all done and my hair is washed and I'm resplendent in your pajamas and robe. So here I am. Think you'd like having me around tonight for a bit.

I'm remembering three years ago tonight... our night out in Asheville. I drank my first champagne that night in Grove Park Inn. I'm so glad it was you, darling. Seems an age ago but I can remember our moment on the terrace. I felt as if I were on top of the world but still that feeling of it not being fair... our being separated persisted and still is, darling. You were so wonderful, remembering the same spot... kissing me as Mrs. K. again on our terrace.

We do have so many beautiful memories. The only unpleasantness about our three years has been the "goodbyes." Everything else has been perfect.

You know what I remembered... you telling me at Grove Park Inn how we'd spend our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary there. You know, you told me that before you proposed. You were sort of taking things for granted, weren't you?

I'm enclosing some clippings I thought would interest you. This deal on the bribing of the Brooklyn College baseball players really smells... looks like the beginning of something.

I'm kind of anxious to see Warren. I think his morale is good. His letter was very cheerful. He couldn't have written one like that if he weren't because he's not good on this cover-up business.

What a little piece of paper does for you, hon. I was so happy tonight I almost had a good cry but I'm smiling now, the way you want me to... not very glamorous, though, darling, what with my hair pinned up. I can still see your amused look. You must have been disillusioned at that.

That seems to be all for now. I know it's the same old story but as I've said I always leave writing to you 'til last. Tuck me in nice, and be careful you don't stick yourself with the pins. I love you so much... so very much and you know how much I miss you.

Take care of you for me and love me lots and miss me more.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

January 30, 1945—Liege

Evening sweetheart,

Glory, glory... I hit the jackpot, again, for the first time since L'il Abner first scorned Daisy Mae.

Five letters, all at once, came today. Every one of them from the little girl I left behind. One of them (Dec. 7) must have come across the ocean in a canoe, and another (Dec. 27) in a Chris Craft. But, the others weren't so old (Jan. 13, 14, 15). The Dec. 27 "bit" was your first letter about Eddie. Some of the things you say in the January letters have puzzled, because I'm sure there are some I haven't received which would help with the explanation.

From what I can tell, or guess, you aren't working. You talk about going to the Federal Reserve Bank and not taking the job because it didn't pay so well, and then you mention baking cakes in the afternoon. As yet, I haven't had any word from you that you left Time. Maybe I'm misinterpreting the whole thing.

You spoke of Jane being worried about Benny. He's old enough to know what he's doing, although you'd hardly realize it sometimes. I've talked with him on the phone several times and exchanged a note or two by mail. He seems to be more interested in the Paris news bureau now than he was a few weeks ago. He, Bob and a couple of others are handling it. The idea is for them to get the news from America and other foreign points, mainly, and edit it for us before putting it on the teletype. They also furnish all editions with pictures, etc. He sent me a message today, saying that Earl and Joe were having dinner with you.

I would have loved to have been with Earl when he got home. He said he was just going to take his little gal and hide her for three days; not let anyone even see her. I'll bet he did, too. Hope the perfume he brought back for you was all right and didn't evaporate en route. There isn't a darn thing to buy for you up here, although one of the fellows heard there was a place nearby that excels in glassware. As soon as I get a breather, I'll try to find it. I haven't too much money (nothing to spend it on, anyway) but enough to make a buy on something.

And, speaking of buying, angel. That house [clipping] you sent me is really, really something, isn't it? I'm sending it back so you can file it. I'd like to investigate something like that for post-war use. \$6,000 doesn't seem like an awful lot of money for it, does it? There's just about everything in there.

(You'll have to excuse me for a bit, hon. Paris just called with a late report from a German source that the Russians are only 40 miles from Berlin. They are checking the story for some kind of

confirmation and if it's worth anything we are going to make over our Page One. Incidentally, it's 12:45 am now. See you in a bit.)

I have a little more time. One of the boys hopped in a jeep to go after one of the Belgian linotype operators and bring him back to set the new stuff. While we're waiting for him and the confirmation call from Paris, I'll stay with you. Can I persuade you to make me a cup of coffee, in the meantime? Getting sleepy now and a hot cup would fix me fine. Might as well warm a roll or two. (Those were the good old days.)

The interruption threw me off the track a bit... now, let's see. Where were we?

Oh, I was going to have a word about the remark Hutton made to Jane and Benny. I wouldn't be telling the truth if I didn't say it not only left a bad taste in my mouth but a little sick to my stomach. Unlike you, "sources" don't mean a damn thing to me, sweetheart. I realize that's not what you meant when you said you could overlook it. But, I can't. And from this day forward, the less I see, hear or speak of Hutton the better I'll like it. I'm ready to believe it since I believe he is capable of doing something like that. My outlook always has been to regard people as I find them. I can associate with them as long as they don't do anything to me. I wouldn't expect anyone to hurt me, or you, more than a "casual" dirty crack like that. And, for my part it spells "the end." Moreover, the first opportunity I get, there will be an accounting. That's two things I have to take care of and believe me I haven't lost a bit of steam over the first one that Andy pulled. His may have been a misunderstanding. I'll find out. But there isn't any excuse, whatsoever, for the other.

There are some loose ends in your letters, darling, that I'll pick up tomorrow. The call from Paris is due to come in any minute.

One last word... haven't heard anything from you about Slesinger and I received a letter from Katie Dear saying the Journal is holding a \$25 bond for me (Xmas bonus or something) until I let them know what to do with it. As soon as I get time, I'll ask her to send it to you, or, if you get a chance to drop over and see Ray, pick it up at the same time... okay?

One of these days, or nights, I'm going to get off a real, honest-to-goodness love letter and I'll surprise myself. You are always very much in my heart, dearest. Just please forgive me for a little while. There goes the phone. 'Night.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

January 31, 1945—New York

Darling,

This makes my sixth letter tonight. For a girl that isn't very talkative, that's quite a bit and they aren't ditto letters either. One to Mom, Warren, Mother Mueller, Lorna Frost, a note to Marge thanking her for the blouse and now my husband.

Darn, I just burned my finger on a match putting a light under the coffee. I'm waiting for Jane to finish showering so we can have our coffee. Wish you could be here. Instead of chocolate doughnuts

we're having three Ritz crackers each spread with cheese. Three... no more. You don't think three crackers could be fattening... at least not as much as chocolate doughnuts.

Jane received two letters from Benny telling her more of the politics of the *Stars and Stripes*. It's awfully smelly, isn't it? Must be when it gets you.

He told her about the room [in Paris?] you and Bill Spear shared with him and how you made them clean for you... that's a new one.

He's sending \$40 for our wedding present. I'll buy more crystal to go with the starter Jane and Benny gave us... ok, I love it, hon. I'm awfully glad we selected it together.

I came home later tonight than usual. Went to Confession at St. Francis near Penn Station for First Friday because tomorrow night I'm meeting El, Marge Lynch, Mrs. O'Connor and Jane and we're all doing a movie and dinner.

Mrs. Kiley has about decided she's being too darn sociable and she'd better stay at home and save a little money. I hate being a wet blanket but I'll just have to be.

We've been discussing it tonight, Jane and I, that we were spending too much money socially.

Darn it, hon. I think about things during the day that I want to write then I can't remember.

Did I tell you last night about not sending anything valuable in the mail? I've heard of two incidents... one from France and one from England. The first one was gifts from a GI for his wife and baby. The package arrived neatly tied but the boxes inside were empty. The second was the personal effects of a gunner shot down over Germany... a prisoner of war now. The things were sent by a buddy... his watch that he had left behind at the base, rings, pen, etc. The boy's mother received the package as did the GI's wife, with the boxes inside empty.

I'm wondering about the packages I'm sending you... if you are receiving them intact.

Speaking of First Fridays... I remember those that I went to across from 309 and left you in bed sleeping. Darling, what a wonderful feeling at those to know you were only a little way away and after the Mass you'd be waiting at home for me. I had attended so many when there were miles and miles between us.

I don't think I ever quite got over our being together at last. The time was so beautiful and perfect, but I am missing you so darn much and that's good, isn't it, darling?

I wanted to send you something back by the fellows but they say they can only carry a tiny package. I can't think of anything you could get in a tiny package that you'd like, so I'll write a letter and ask them to send it on to you from over there. I gather that Carl is to go on to Liege from Paris.

It's after one a.m., darling. We seem to spend awfully late dates but I can't think of a nicer way to get tired than writing to you. I still have my shower to take, so I'm not ready to be tucked in. Tell you what... I'll go and do it then come back. Will that be all right?

I'm back, darling. Feel much better. I can go on for a bit without falling asleep on your shoulder. You might almost call me glamorous now except I have your pjs on as usual. Sounds like I wear

them all the time. Really, hon, they do get laundered occasionally. I don't have my hair pinned up and I smell nice..."Tweed."

This is one of those nights I'd love to have my back rubbed with Jergens or something. Jane went to bed before I could get her to do it. Between the showers and this cold weather, the skin on my back feels as if it might crack, it's so dry.

You know something I missed doing while you were home? I didn't watch you shave and I wanted to. I remember I got a couple of soapy kisses that I didn't expect but I'd settle for a couple of those now. Remind me when you come home that I want to watch you shave that funny face of yours. I loved your being all nice and smooth to go to sleep with. No one ever had as nice a shining look as you do, hon, after you've shaved and showered.

Do you mind my rattling on? I like this being with you. No one around but you, hon.. all your pictures around.

Oh, nearly forgot... a letter from Time telling me they were having a record made of the "Molotoff" story and it should be forthcoming in a week or ten days. Isn't that super? Did I tell you that since it was the Army they won't give permission to have your talk on the Army hour recorded? The meanies. Father John is coming in for dinner soon and we're all going up to NBC to listen.

I don't know whether it means anything but one of the bosses told me today that my production was the highest. From all appearances, the work is going on... as long as we are to work six days I think I'll stay on for the extra money and get something else later. Perhaps I can stay with Time... it is a swell organization.

I have gone on at a great rate but you'd better not mind.

I'm ready to be tucked in now. May I come over to your house, for a few minutes to say goodnight, then you can tuck me in. I'm still waiting to hear why you kiss me three times. I love you so. Will I ever be able to tell you enough? Be careful, and mind Mrs. K. when she says no misbehaving. Miss me and love me more.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

January 31, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

Help... help... I'm snowed under. Please get me out from under. After being half-buried under five letters from you yesterday, along comes eight... 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8... more today. Thirteen in two days. Canyamine? Why, it makes me feel like a kid looking at his first Christmas tree. I know I can't expect these things every day, but nobody can stop me from enjoying it now.

It's pretty hard rounding up everything you say in eight letters, darling, but believe me, I've read every single line, not once but twice. Because I'm so damned busy when the mail comes in the mid-afternoon, I put the letters in my desk drawer and wait until I'm finished for the night before I read them. Tonight, it took me more than a half-hour to read them all. The letters were those of Dec. 14

and 17 [missing], Jan. 6, 7, 16, 17, 20 and 21. Besides those, there were others from El, Bette, Charlie Slocum (of ANS) and a belated Xmas card from Ruth Rommel.

One of your letters cleared up the mystery of “is you is or is you ain’t” working. You didn’t say much about it... just that the Time job was lasting until the end of the month... but I gathered from that why you were looking for another. Are you still dead against working in the Stars and Stripes office? Or, has somebody else taken over the job permanently? Not that I have a suggestion that you might take the job, if available, ‘cause I agreed with you the last time you mentioned not feeling right about working there.

Your conversation with Slesinger, of course, didn’t help me make up my mind. I still don’t know whether or not to give Sherman the O.K. and take the \$200 or wait until I see what Slesinger is going to do. As soon as Andy gets back I’ll try to get the latest from him and make a final decision. If I’m to go ahead on my own I’ll ask Sherman for \$250 and let it go at that. If they’ll offer \$200, I think I may be able to get an extra \$50.

Thanks to you, and El, I was able to get a clear picture of the Mass for Eddie. It pleased me to know that Dave and Father Eddie were the deacon and sub-deacon, assisting John. I’ve asked, but as yet haven’t received, any more information about Ed.

I love to hear you talk about those moments we’ll never forget. It’s not strange that you should remember all of them, because I have, and I find it easy. They meant so much to us then, as they always will. I guess there just isn’t anything that you haven’t mentioned in your letters since I’ve been back here. I’ve thought so many times of how silly I must have looked doing my calisthenics, the superman pose, turning the hose on you, and the cold water shower, watching you across the bed while we were saying our prayers, how angelic you looked on our wedding day, the times you cried and how good it made me feel to be able to hold you when the tears came... oh, sweetheart, those days will be ours again... honestly, they will.

You didn’t have much to say about the proposed trip to Russia, but now that it is practically cold, I know you are feeling much better about it. Still, it wouldn’t be very practical to go now unless it came through pretty quickly. Uncle Joe’s boys are only 35 miles from Berlin at last report tonight, and while Germany may not give up with the fall of the capital it will be just about over.

Very little has been said... concretely, that is... what we’ll do when it’s over, over here. The paper, I gather, will be published for quite a while afterward... how long, I don’t know. Whether or not we will go to the Pacific hasn’t been thoroughly covered, either, although Bud’s impending shift there is being done just in case the *Stars and Stripes* moves in that direction. Personally, I can’t see how the devil we can operate over there, unless they split us up into several teams and send us to central locations where large numbers of troops are concentrated. Hawaii, Australia, Philippines and places like that. No, I won’t volunteer... believe me, when it’s finished here I want to get back to you, for keeps. While I was home, if you remember, I was fairly enthusiastic about us going Pacificwards, but at the time, I visualized our old crowd. They are scattered too far and wide now. The organization has grown too big and the closeness and familiarity that once belonged to us in London... are gone. I

still have the fever, and despite what others like Benny and Bob say, they have it, too. Perhaps, not as we once did.. but it's still there.

As soon as I can find out... even a hint... what may be done when it's finished here, I'll work as fast as I can.

And now, it's 1:10 am, and time all little girls were in bed. So, just take yourself off my lap and toddle along to the crib. Daddy'll be along in a minute to tuck you in after you've said your prayers. I like that smell of your hair, angel.

'Night, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

February 2, 1945—New York

My darling,

Did you miss me last night? I wasn't around. If you will remember I was to do a dinner and show with Janey, El, Mrs. O'Connor and Marge Lynch. We went to Louis' and had spaghetti. Remember, that was where we went before we became Mr. and Mrs. K. and we, or rather I, met Janey there.

After a drink and dinner, we went to the Roxy to see "Sunday Dinner for a Soldier" and the Cafe Zanzibar revue... Louis Armstrong and Bill Robinson and the best March of Time, "Unknown Bottle." The whole show was super. The picture is very simple but I liked it. Janey is a little prejudiced... says there couldn't be a family like that, along with the Times revue... but I say there are people like that.

We had a guest this evening for a drink... the esteemed Red Mueller... but I wasn't the least bit impressed. I asked him a lot of questions, however. His answers I took with a grain of salt. He claims you fellows will be over there at least five years more and doesn't see any prospect of your demobilization. If anything, your transfer to the Pacific. He goes back to Europe soon, but is preparing for his Pacific work. I don't want to be optimistic, darling, but I still hear you telling me you'll be home for our anniversary. However, I'm getting to the point where I live a day at a time and plans hinge on your homecoming, whenever it will be.



Red Mueller presented an idea that I hadn't thought of in regards to our house. He said he was going to wait to build and take advantage of all the progress in development such as lighting, heating, etc. It is an idea. I would love to have enough time before you come home to have a home ready for you to hang your hat up in. I would like that very much. I could do it in a short time, when I know you're coming. Please, darling, don't think I am getting wild ideas over the recent western front news. I'm not, darling. I'm listening and reading about it but I am accepting it all in a cautious way and remembering what you said about not believing everything I read or hear. I'll go on waiting just as you will.

Red Mueller was talking about buying a house in Connecticut for \$20,000 and describing a ring for his betrothed that he designed himself and had made. Must have cost him a young fortune. He says he knows you slightly.

Remember my speaking of the girl that works across from him at Time whose husband is with the O.U.I. She's bringing me cigarettes for you. Friends are giving them and she in turn is bringing me a pack. I have three now, so I'll get another box off over the weekend.

Carl called this evening and said if I wanted to send you a pen or a pencil he'd be glad to take it back to you. I can't think of anything that small. I mentioned his taking a letter back but I think he's afraid it will be taken from him.

He said he might come in this evening for a short drink, but so far he hasn't come in and it's too late now.

Today's news of the release of the 510 Japanese-held Americans is so welcome. I've wanted to call Marge and ask about Agnes' husband but decided not to. According to the paper those physically able to work were moved to Japan. She had a postal card several weeks ago from him. Perhaps she will be able to learn something from these that have been released. There were a number of officers among them. What a great day for them, darling. None of



On January 30, over a hundred American Rangers and Scouts and several hundred Filipino guerrilla fighters liberated the Cabanatuan prison camp from the Japanese, freeing over 500 survivors (some shown above) from the Bataan death march of 1942. The news was released to the public on February 2.

us can ever know what they have gone through. I have such a feeling of gratitude for them. Certainly they have been a sort of forgotten group of men.



Bill Maulden (1921–2003) was an American editorial cartoonist who won two Pulitzer Prizes for his work. He was most famous for his World War II cartoons depicting American soldiers, as represented by the archetypal characters Willie and Joe, two weary, unshaven and bedraggled infantry troopers who stoically endure the difficulties and dangers of duty in the field. He famously poked fun at General Patton for trying to insist that soldiers be shaved at all times, provoking Patton's threats to have him jailed, but Eisenhower told Patton to leave him alone. These cartoons were widely published in the U.S. and continually appeared in the Stars and Stripes.

There is a long article about Sgt. Maulden in this week's Life and his cartoons... extremely interesting. I'll stick it in your box.

Today was so clear and not too cold. I don't mind the cold when it's dry. Last night was so lovely. The sky was like crystal and my very bright star held a prominent place. I wondered if you had looked up and seen it earlier in the evening.

We were discussing our differences in makeup over a very late dinner. Jane's going to dinner with Red Mueller. She says it means no more than going to dinner with me. That I can believe, knowing Jane, but I still couldn't believe that I could do it. I'd miss you so much more than usual. I'll save my dinners for two for us... do you mind, darling? Jane and I are so different in many ways, it's amazing that we get along as well as we do.

Jane is still not giving up any ideas about going over. Red Mueller suggested she work on NBC and he'd work on a magazine publisher he knows that wants to send six correspondents overseas for copy... True Romance and Life Story. It seems he has (R. Muller) written stories for them under the penname of Rosie Gluck, or some such name. They pay about \$500 for a thousand words... mostly drivel, of course. I think even I might be able to dash off a thousand words of that. It seems that you could get a passport through the magazine but you'd still need the NBC behind you. In Jane's position, you could probably do it but I don't have the contacts. I still have the feeling that both of you will be home before we could possibly get over. There are a lot of angles, though, aren't there?

I had a tummy-ache last night. I don't think what I ate at Louis' agreed with me. I'd have been fine, darling, if you'd been around to take care of me. Didn't last too long, but I missed you a little more.

Nearly forgot... the vocalist with Louis Armstrong sang your old favorite "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby," except I like your rendition so much better. I miss you singing to me. Jane was just remembering your Irish ballads the night I had to be put to bed, and even you were a little happy, darling. I'm still a little ashamed of that deal now. Do you forgive me for being such a bad girl?

I love you so much. Please, you will be careful and keep well? Tell me about your hand and if the cold is affecting it very much. Did you try wearing the glove on it at night with the ointment? I'm being Mrs. K., I know, but I do want you to be all right and I know your hand must be uncomfortable when it gets so dry.

Please, darling, mum is the word on any angles we might have on coming over in the event you have to stay after hostilities cease, because too many of the wives are interested and I think we have a right to be a little selfish on anything that might aid us in going over.

I wish I had my shower and was ready to be tucked in, but if you will wait a little bit for me... I won't be long. You see I've picked up a little speed now since I'm in "the big league." By the time you get back you'll have to keep up with me. El always complains when we go out that I go too fast for her so you see I'm improving.

I'll go and get my shower so you can tuck me in. A letter would be nice to find in the morning. I'll be patient. Love me very much, and keep well. Goodnight, darling.

Always and forever, your Billee

February 3, 1945—Jersey City

Hello darling,

I'm at 195 and right at home in one of our corners. I'd be so happy to put the pen and paper away and hold your head in my lap... I miss you so. Jane and I came over earlier. El was out shopping when we came in so we made ourselves at home and waited. She came in soon after. We had a drink, then tea and lemon pie, along with a lot of chatter about post-war plans.

Also, she let me read your letter of the 15th. It was like getting another one almost. Hon, I didn't order you to stay out of the field. I'm glad you are, however. I'll put the whip away if you like. About Ben's box... I know, hon, how you must have felt especially after it was opened. The fellows must have ribbed you. You see, Jane didn't have a request and I had two. That was the week you left so I gave one to Jane. She had to use my return address because the letter and envelope was addressed to me. She didn't have a letter from Benny yet that she could even write a request on. Do you feel better now, darling? I sincerely hope you have received several packages by now.

Mrs. K. had the afternoon off... I had lunch with Jane, Carl and Joe... enjoyed it lots. Told the fellows all the latest news about the paper. Since the trouble in Paris, Benny hasn't been able to send information cables to the fellows. So all the Liege dope you told me was news to them. Joe is swell. I like him a lot. Carl Graff goes to Chicago for a week or ten days on some deal, so with Andy and Carl gone, Joe'll be lonely. We'll have him down to dinner this week. I think he feels at home with us now.

From the office, we went shopping so the boys could take something back to you. Andy is bringing such a beautiful sheep-lined vest to you... his idea. I wish I had thought of it, but I've had no opportunity to shop. The gloves I thought were swell. I hope they'll be practical. I got them at

Abercrombie & Fitch. I could have spent a fortune on you there. You'd be simply lolling in comfort. Jane got Benny a super swell sweater.

Of all things, we ran into Andy in Macy's buying a sheep-lined coat. I'm glad because otherwise I wouldn't have seen him.

The stationery is in along with the gloves. I'm sorry, hon. I went in one store after another trying to find some airmail envelopes, so I'm hoping you'll be able to find something to use. There are plenty in the packages on the way over.

I dashed off a note at your typewriter in the office. I missed you so there, as usual.

Pop just came in from Eileen S___[?] reception in Union City. He's off down the street for beer so guess I have one... or I guess I won't because I want to receive in the morning.

Another Saturday night almost gone. One more we can mark off the calendar that's bringing us a little closer to each other.

El says Pop is going to sell after it's all over. He says he wouldn't want to stay on here. [In fact, after the war, El and Tom moved in with Pop at 195 and raised their children in that house.] A girl in Albany engaged to a fellow in the 5th Armored, sent pictures of Eddie and her fiancée this week. She doesn't know what has happened. They were taken in what seems to be the marshaling area in England... wonderful pictures... post card size. Marge Lynch's brother is in them and an O'Neil fellow from around the corner. [These pictures have not been found.]

Darling, I brought my red woolies over tonight to sleep in. I know how cold it gets and without you here to keep me warm I had to wear them. I'll still save them, though, 'till you come home.

You would have laughed... Jane and I were taking the shuttle to go to Macy's and got on the Flushing instead of the Times Square train... went quite a ways out before we realized... we were just chatting away.

I'm falling asleep as usual. Please tuck me in nice. I love you so, so much. I'm missing you even more. Keep well and remember how much I love you.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

February 4, 1945—New York

Hello my darling,

Do you think I can come in for a bit? Perhaps I'd better explain my attire before you say yes. You see, I had a hunch 195 might be cold so I trotted out the red p.j.s and took them along. I was awfully glad... because it was.

I missed you so. El gave us Pop's room again... seemed as if I just had to be waiting for you to come to bed instead of Jane. You know, darling, I like Jane such an awful lot. We are both very fond of each other, but we'd much rather live with our respective husbands than each other.

El came over this evening and we went to the corner movie to see “I Loved a Soldier” with Paulette Goddard and Sonny Tufts. It was pretty good. But if I see another picture like that I think I’m even going to stop being an escapist. I should have taken two hankies instead of one.

It’s raining, snowing and blowing all at the same time out... tomorrow will be lovely, I’m sure.

The newsreel tonight showed the landings on Luzon [Philippines] and the battle on the remains of the Bulge. Of the two, the guys in the Pacific had the better deal. I know what you meant when you wrote “at least where Eddie is, he won’t be cold again.” Darling, it just goes on and on. I can’t think of anything worse than those guys trying to fight in the awful snow.

Tonight we have the good news of the capture of Manila. They stopped the movie to make the announcement and it was met with cheers.

I wonder how Andy and Carl are making out on the plane trip. With this change in weather they probably won’t get off. I hope you like what I’m sending back. I know you’re going to think me crazy but I couldn’t find any envelopes to send with the stationery. I tried several places but no luck.

I would love to hear that you are receiving the packages, darling. I’ve been sending one nearly every week.

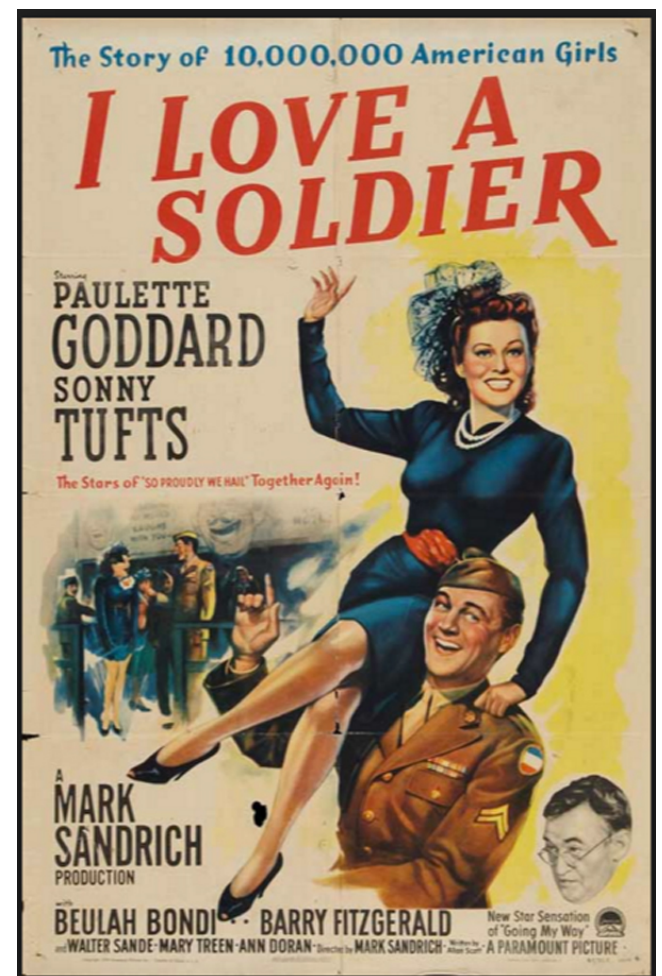
According to yesterday’s New York Post, the *Stars and Stripes* is giving daily lessons in Russian... for your benefit?

Pop is having to stick to his pipe. El isn’t looking for many cigarettes for him. That awful cough he has is from eating them practically. The pipe he doesn’t smoke too much and the rest from cigarettes will be good for his throat. Annice is getting so big. She called me “Billee” today in her own little way for the first time.

You know, I’m awfully glad to be Mrs. Kiley. I’m awfully fond of you, proud to be Mrs. K. I miss not being able to make my oft-repeated query, “Are you happy, darling?” Neither of us, of course, is happy because we can’t be together, but somehow in spite of all the loneliness I have a special happiness in my heart because I love you so much.

We went to “Our Lady of Mt. Carmel” this morning to 12 o’clock Mass. I couldn’t help but remember you were with me the last time there, that we could have attended mass together.

I took out my wedding veil to look at today. We had such a perfect wedding. It all came back again... that beautiful week. A week after you arrived we were asleep very close to each other. I think the Kileys were very smart not to waste any valuable time, don’t you?



Guess what? Mom called while I was at the movie. I was just sick because it's a red-letter day when she calls me. Jane talked to her and she's very busy at home. Feels better than she did in Ohio. My cousin Anne, the one you were going to put me out of 309 for, to make comfortable, is spending her vacation there.

I presume Warren has started his furlough and is in Ohio so it won't be too long before he'll be accepting our hospitality.

I want to dash off a short note to Mom. I'll be back for you to tuck me in. I just couldn't go to sleep very well without being tucked in...

All finished, and ready for your goodnight kiss. I love you so, darling... so, so much.

Take such good care of you and love me lots.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

February 5, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart

Seems like the only time I can tell what day it is any more is by people in their Sunday best going to church. Then, I know it's Sunday. Time is flying so fast on this job I don't know where it's all going.

Yesterday morning, I arose as usual, dressed and started for the office. I thought the street appeared quiet, then it suddenly struck me that it was Sunday. I kept right on going to church, and was ten minutes early for Mass. Why, it seemed only a couple of days before that I went to Mass. At any rate, it all goes to hurry me home to the arms that are waiting for me.



The old city in Liege, where Charles probably walked.

Tonight was an "early" night.

I finished at 11:10 in the composing room, then put aside everything else until tomorrow, so I could sit down and talk with you. I keep saying to myself... "the hell with work and everything else... I'm going to write tonight if it's the last thing I do." Then, I find there are things I just can't put off... a feature to get up tonight for the morning.. get those pictures out of the files and send them to the engravers... call the carpenter in the building and be sure he gets those file cabinets made... go down and see the press

room foreman and find out why last night's cuts were so dark in the paper... try and find the GI who's getting our food and tell him we want less potatoes and more green vegetables.

That goes on every night. And, what I'm trying to say is that I'm ashamed of my letters these last few weeks. They aren't like the old ones, are they? I try, but I always have so many things on my mind, I just can't put them out for long enough to make love to you.

When I get your letters, and listen to you pouring your heart out, I feel like a heel because I haven't given you much cause to love me as you do. I know what I have in my heart, and I want to tell you, like I always have... but it looks so impersonal on the typewriter and in the end I get that futile feeling again.

Like the three "great big bits of heaven," which came today. Yes, three more. They are beautiful letters, like all the rest. They were postmarked Jan. 11, 12 and 13, but I scarcely look at the dates any more. I just like to listen to you talk the way you do.

You mentioned a "last will and testament," which Rita has. If she will send it to you, it's all right with me. I even forget now what it was all about. I showed you the one I gave to Earl, which he was to send if anything went wrong on the missions I made. But, I can't think of any other. Perhaps, it's one he gave to me and which I never had to send, thank God.

Your mention of Mom reminded me that I had another letter from Lee, telling me she and Harry were about to take off for Florida and that Mom had been to a doctor, got a clean bill of health and intended to go back to Asheville after a visit with Aunt Mae. I gathered Lee's kids were going to stay with Auntie Kee and Uncle Fred, yes?

I haven't written to any of the people in N.A. except Al and Dot. And, I should be getting something off to Berta, now that she's about to bear another heir or heiress. Grace's accident emphasized my belief that she'll never grow up. I like her for it, too. Can you picture a mother of two sledding?

The Jean Cosgrove you talked of is Jean Redfern. Rose Cosgrove is still single as far as I know.

I have received only one package, just in case you are wondering. The others will be along pretty quick, though. And, it won't be necessary for you to send Time, because it, together with Newsweek and Life, are sent to us by the N.Y. office. And, speaking of Newsweek reminds me that I received a Christmas card from John Horn, sports editor of Newsweek who was responsible for that "better-looking Pat O'Brien" stuff. The clippings you sent were swell. I'd like you to send others if you will, Miss Bergman. I still think you are the Bergman type (and it looks as if Jane agrees with me).

As Carl told you, or was it Bucknell, Benny is working on the Paris News Bureau, but not because of anything connected with Bob. In fact, Bob wanted him to work on it instead of for the Paris edition. Bob isn't so dumb, either, because he knows Benny is a hard worker and a conscientious one, to take over when Bob feels like playing. Between us, and Jane if you want, the only good coming from the service is coming from Benny. Bob is supposed to be in charge of it but has failed miserably, from what I can see of the stuff we're getting. We repeatedly ask for things we never get. Only when we ask Benny to see that we get the stuff does it come. I talked with Benny on the phone yesterday and

today and he promised to cable ANS in New York and see if he could get us better service from there.

I agree with Benny that it is good to know you and Jane are together. He said he never had the peace of mind in London that he has now, knowing that she is with you. Somehow, I feel the same way, but it hits me differently. I knew everything would be all right when you were with Mom, but in New York I felt you wanted to stay there and would find Jane a good “mate.” I’m sure my feelings have been borne out. You said she’s like Benny in a lot of ways. Yes, sometimes I want to strangle Benny, but I do have an attachment for him and love the dope, with all his faults.

About Corrigan, hon... when I arranged for the limousines, Mrs. Corrigan wouldn’t tell me what the price was and said to forget about the bill until we were settled. Needless to say, I completely forgot about it after that. If I get around to it, I’ll drop her a line of apology. That’s another one of the 756 letters I intend to write.

Now, a word or five about our baseball team.

I’ve smiled every time I think of what you said in the letter... “Maybe we tried too hard. Guess we’re not too bright about these things.” Didn’t you even blush, when you wrote that?

I agree, hon, perhaps we weren’t very bright about “those things.” At least I guess I’m not, anyway. But, that “trying too hard...” I can’t help it, sweetheart, but I have to smile again. I picture you sitting there with the end of the pen between your teeth, thinking back and trying to find out why you aren’t a mother by this time. Trying to discover where we make the mistakes. Covering all the angles, and not finding an answer. Finally concluding that... “well, nobody can say we didn’t do our part...”

Oh, I love you to pieces, Mrs. Kiley. For every little thing about you.

Perhaps, we did try “too hard.” But, you will remember, how I often said I was going to tie myself down or get you to lock me in a closet? Too, how I said we were “going to be good boys and girls, for a change?” The spirit was urging but... like I always said... you just make me want to practically devour you whenever I look at you. We should have been more sensible (I wish I could make myself believe that) and perhaps the pitcher would be “warming up” now.

If you have any ideas, or have found out how or why I made an error (check with the official scorer) I’d like to know now, puss. You might as well begin to educate me now, so that when I come home to go to work again (oops, didn’t mean it that way) I’ll know how to play my position.

Maybe I played too close to second base, instead of playing deep shortstop. I probably picked up some wrong pointers from the Cardinals while I was in St. Louis, so that when I came back I was so eager to make a “putout” I just played the hitters all wrong.

Now, how’s the money holding out? I’ve lost all track of what you have or what you should have, darling. Can you give me an idea of how much cash you have available? Anything you were able to put away, etc? Don’t think for a minute that you’ll be burdening me with more worry by telling me about our financial situation, because I want to be kept up to date on that, too. I have about \$80 in my pocket now... just holding on to it until I can get enough to send back and make it worth while.

There isn't anything for me to spend it on here except for laundry and PX rations like cigarettes. On two occasions I ducked across the street with Bill Spear for a glass of wine. That's how much time we have for social life. That will serve to answer your question if I need any money.

I'd like to hear all you can tell me about Tupper Lake or the Ramapos. I've passed through Tupper Lake. It's in the Adirondacks, not too far from Placid. It would be ideal for weekends in the winter and vacations but not so good in the summer because of the long round trip through Sunday traffic. The Ramapos deal, I gather, would mean we'd have to build a place, doesn't it? If possible, I'd like to get one already built, with the plumbing, etc. Let me know what you can find out, though.

Now it's time again for those little girls to kiss their daddies goodnight and be tucked in... one... two... three.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

February 5, 1945—New York

Dearest Charles,

May I come in for a bit? Almost I'm beginning to think you might not want me around since I've had one letter in three weeks but I'm only teasing, hon. I know there must be a good reason. Mrs. K. says there better be.



Among those prisoners liberated in Manila were nearly 100 Army nurses who had stayed with their soldier patients in 1942. Manila, February 1945.

I was kind of busy tonight ironing and washing my hair. I nearly roasted in these red woolies last night here in the apartment so I'm back to your striped numbers. Honest, hon, I feel almost guilty with the comfort we have when I know you don't have it. And there are so many that aren't as comfortable as you.

The radio has been busy all night on the capture of Manila and the liberation of all the internees. What a day to celebrate. It's so wonderful that they are free again. I talked to

Marge today and Jack is interned on an island south of Luzon. It's still held by the Japanese. One of the commentators tonight said the capture of the Philippines would reduce the Jap war effort 50%

but that it wouldn't be noticed for at least eight months... then there would be a rapid decline in their effort.

I ironed one your sport shirts tonight, hon. I was remembering the Monday you came back after we said goodbye in the a.m. How quickly you got yourself into your slacks and shirt. You know, hon, I think you'll be glad to be just plain Mr. K. with no stripes.

According to the Telegram tonight, Pfc. Thomas Hoge is a German prisoner. You probably have all the information but if not, I'll send the clipping along so you'll have it.

Jane and I just finished a long discussion on beds and how neither of us like twin beds. I'll never forget how far away you seemed in the Grosvenor when we had those darned twin beds. How quickly we lost interest in pushing the darn things together after the first night. From there, to 309 and the studio couch. I wonder if the jerk that invented those ever had to sleep on one. You know hon, for only being married three months we slept in an array of beds. Let's see... I'll enumerate:

1. Lexington Hotel: such a nice place to start out in.
2. Aunt K's bed in Massillon: she was so sweet to give us her bedroom.
3. Your old bedroom at 412, improved with a double bed just in time: that was a perfect ten days. I'm glad we went home.
4. Richmond, Virginia... Robert Lee, wasn't it? You know, I can't remember exactly whether we stayed there or not. I do remember the bed was so darned high.
5. The Grosvenor: those darn twin beds.
6. 195: that was good. We had El's bed one time and Pop's a couple of times.
7. 309: our nice studio couch but we had fun anyway. I think I tried every way in the world to make that up comfortably.
8. Dot's couch: only for a couple of hours after the cellar party.
9. 56: we won that night. Poor Jane and Benny had to sleep on the floor. I can see him yet fixing the cushions.

Did I leave any out, hon? Maybe you can think of some more. Seems as if that's it, though. I'm really rattling on, aren't I? Do you mind? I'm just kind of missing you and since I don't have any mail to answer I sort of wander around with my pen. I heard "Ain't Misbehavin'" tonight... an old Fats Waller recording. Of course I thought of you right away. I remember your writing that to me from England.

I read some of your old letters tonight. You're so nice, darling. Do you want to hear me tell you again? I love you so very much. I miss all the little things so much.

You'd better tuck me in, hon... real quick like. Kiss me goodnight and take my love with you. Be careful, hon, and keep so well. I love you. Goodnight.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your sweetheart

February 7, 1945—New York

My darling,

Oh, I love you so... remind me to be very nice to you. Mrs. K. received two wonderful letters this a.m. I fairly danced down 14th Street, I was so happy. I carried them all the way to work... could hardly wait to shed coat and hat so I could read them. By this time, I can almost quote them word for word.

You will have received my other letters telling my understanding of your position. How busy you are, etc., so now you shouldn't be worried. I only hope you aren't overdoing it with the long hours. Do you still have your cold? Must be, if you've had the cold sore. I'll stick a camphor stick in the next box in case you don't have one.

I couldn't help but laugh over the mustache incident. Wish I could have seen it. Remind me to hate that barber for ruining your nice hairdo. You were just getting it to behave itself. That must keep you busy combing now.

Too, when this reaches you, you will have received the cable about Berta's twins. I nearly fell out of the phone booth when I called Dot today, never expecting to hear Berta had them this a.m. She wasn't due to go 'til about the fifteenth. I think it's wonderful. Wouldn't you like to have twin boys? I would. Imagine getting a pitcher and maybe a catcher at the same time. I'll see her Friday evening, I think. If not then... over the weekend. I'll take roses from us. OK? She ought to get a carload of them for that. I wonder if she took out twin insurance whenever she bought some of her layette. Jack must be just struttin', although Dot said he was running around like a chicken with its head off.

Marg came down last evening... missing Andy quite a bit already. We talked all evening, mostly Stars and Stripes. She seems to like the job on the paper fine. Joe is in charge now. Funny as heck, Llewellan went to Virginia to teach a special service class, leaving Joe in authority to sign checks, etc. Before leaving, he decided the group should have \$5.00 a day per diem and gave the order for the difference to be supplemented out of the petty cash. Joe is afraid to write the checks for fear Llewellan doesn't know what he's talking about.

Giblen was extended another 60 days. His wife's leave from her job was up so she has returned to Boston in order to retain her position. Seems like one of you guys could have gotten a break like that, but I can't see myself tooting back to Boston to keep a job. I'm afraid you'd be stuck with me.

Marg is staying at the Henry Hudson for the present. Her family is insisting she come home. I don't know what she will do on that score.

I've learned something today about being married, darling... not to carry tales about your husband's co-workers. I'm speaking of the cable incident. It wasn't the time for Andy to bring it up, but he just didn't think I guess. That has been the only time we've used the cable service... at least my only time, and I thought it an emergency and you would want me to do it that way. I shouldn't have told you about it. How I'd hate to be the one that might start something between you and the fellows coming back. There's enough of that going on in Paris among the brass, etc., without the wives entering the

picture. So, hon, if I've stepped out of line, forgive me and I'll do my best not to be a part of a recurrence.

I'm happy to hear you have plenty of warm clothing. I was going to ask if I could get you one of those lined coats over here. I could send it back with Joe. I hate to think of you ever being cold.

Some of the news on the big three broke today but nothing you could put your finger on. I wonder if it could be over soon... no, I won't get optimistic.

I don't know whether Andy will mention this to you or not, or if you will see him. But probably the reason we haven't heard about the Molotoff story is that Slesinger is trying to swing another *Stars and Stripes* deal... to have a *Stars and Stripes* movie. The production company is very much interested but won't go ahead until the Army and Washington has given a full OK, and they won't OK it 'til they are sure the company will produce it. I don't know whose baby it will be. I imagine Andy or Bud with the aid of Steve have cooked it up. At any rate, he is still in Hollywood. If Andy hasn't mentioned this perhaps you'd better forget it.



The Yalta Conference, sometimes called the Crimea Conference and codenamed the Argonaut Conference, held from February 4 to 11, 1945, was the World War II meeting of the heads of government of the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, represented by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Premier Joseph Stalin, respectively, for the purpose of discussing Europe's post-war reorganization. The conference convened in the Livadia Palace near Yalta in Crimea.

The weather is much milder which is a relief. That cold was beginning to get me, and we have all the comforts.

Why doesn't Benny get a transfer to Liege to one of the other editions if he hates it so? Seems as if you could use him as busy as you all are, or is he afraid he might miss something? He had mentioned to Jane about the A.W.S. deal but she told him to use his own judgment, that if he got back here and didn't like it he'd be worse off and besides, they could send him to the Pacific. I don't know what he will decide and my guess is he doesn't either.

The Russian deal doesn't sound so ominous as it did at first. I'm getting used to the idea and I can see what a good deal it will be if it goes through. From the 135 miles you mention the distance has narrowed to about 30. What a _____ they have made but they don't have the Siegfried Line to tackle.

Jane, Marg and Carl's friend Edith and Mrs. K. had dinner in Hamburger Mary's tonight, then saw a newsreel. A very quiet evening but the kind war "widders" should spend. The newsreel was swell... one of the best I've seen.

El and Mrs. O'Connor are coming over tomorrow night for dinner. No show, however. We'll probably just talk.

Seems as if we stay so busy, hon, and that it all takes so darn much money. We've just going to have to learn to say no when people make suggestions. Seems as if everything you do costs so much.

I sent you another box today... the gals in the office are amazed at my persistence in sending you a box every week. I hope the cheese and crackers mentioned in the letter were out of one of the boxes. I've never heard that one has been received.

Received the recording of Molotoff this a.m. from March of Time. Can't wait to hear it. I'll have to take it to 195. Pop will get a kick out of hearing it, too. [Unfortunately, this recording has vanished.]

Gee, hon, it's late and I'm so darned weary. You're sleeping so sound now. I wish I could snuggle up close to you and get nice and warm. How good it used to feel those mornings at 309. I'd awake and be so cold but not for long.

Just where do you get off calling me "chile?" Sounds like Earl. He kept calling me that all through lunch. You can call me anything you like, and I'll love it. Of course, I was good at playing hard to get!!! Or was I?

Tuck me in, darling, so nice. I love you so, so much and miss you a million times more. Keep well, and love me lots.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

February 8, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart

I don't know where to begin tonight. About two hours ago we received word that a big blowoff was taking place in Paris. Naturally, I can't help but wonder what it is all about.

Meanwhile, I received two letters and your extra special Valentine.

Well, let's talk about you, first. You are, and will always be, the big thing in my life. And, besides, I would much rather just sit here and write your name... Billee, Billee, Billee, Billee Ruth Marie Gr... oops, Kiley. Mrs. Charles Francis Kiley... than talk about Paris or anything else.

Together with your two letters, I received one from a fellow named George Buckless. He is in the 29th Infantry Division. I met him way back in England when he was captain of the division's

basketball team. I came to know him pretty well, liked him a lot. Even sent him one of our wedding announcements.

In his letter, he congratulated us on behalf of all the fellows in his section of the 29th whom I know. He also enclosed the clipping. He said about three weeks ago they were passing through a little German village near Hoertgen. Some of the First Army troops had passed there a few days before. He found an old, battered paper in a blitzed house which they used to get in out of the weather and eat lunch. Scanning the paper he noticed the picture... "Jersey City Newlyweds." He let out a howl, clipped the picture out and put it in his pocket. When he wrote, he sent the clipping, with the added comment... "never know where you're going to find you, Charlie." He didn't say what paper it was, but it looks like it may have been in the Jersey Observer, a Hoboken paper.

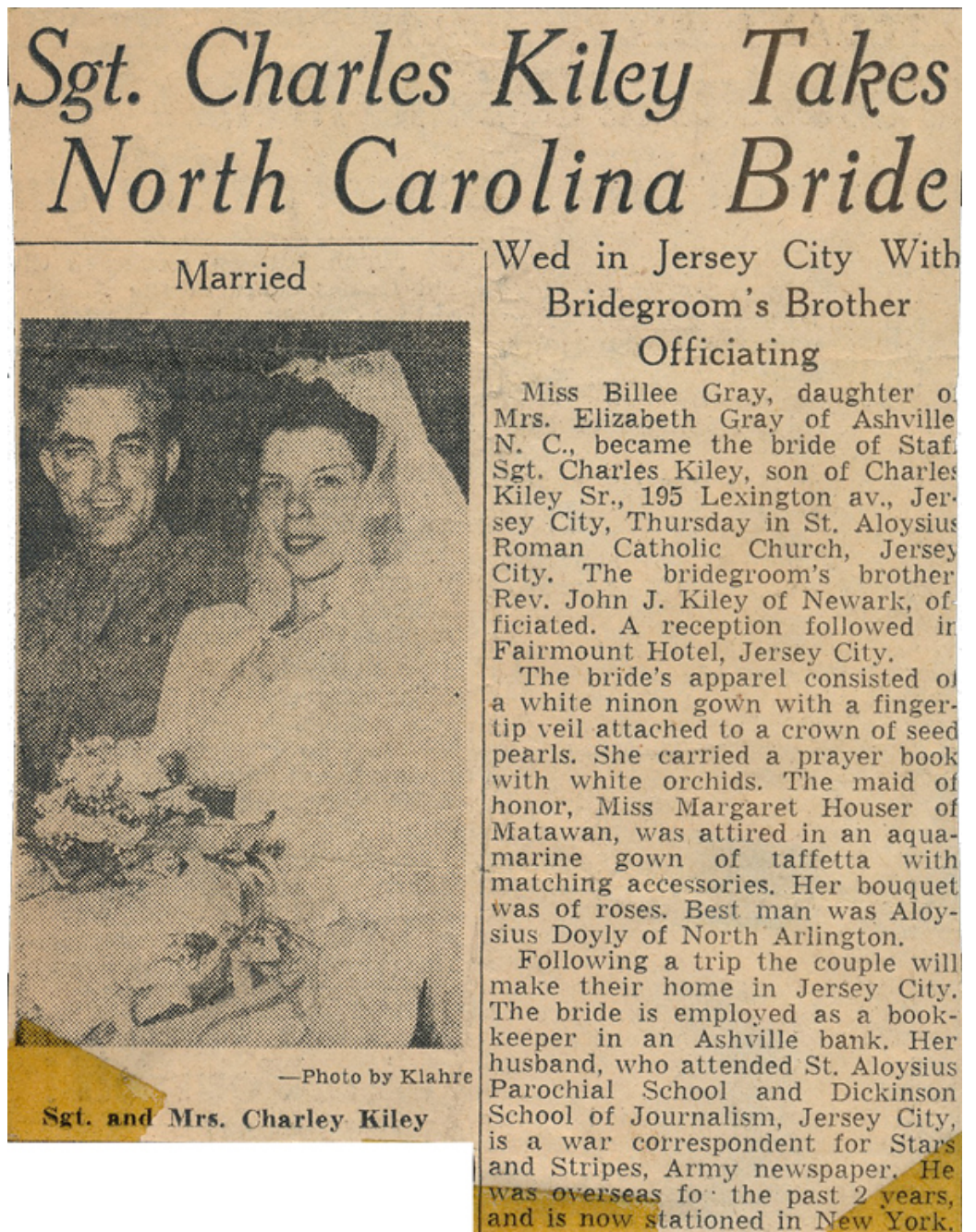
The letters, were those of Dec. 7 and Jan. 30. From one extreme to the other, as it were.

I have one thing to say about the Dec. 7 letter, and it's to correct a misstatement. Benny, in his letter to Jane after our arrival in London, said "even Charlie was drunk" at the Lamb and Lark reunion. Well, I wasn't. Just for the record, I believe I had a half dozen scotches, and I think, one from the bottle of rye I gave to Alf. The day, or night, that Mr. K. gets wobbly, or even fuzzy, on seven drinks... will be, indeed, a frosty Friday. To be truthful, I can't recall whether or not anybody got tight, with the exception of Alf. Bob may have... probably did. I can't remember about Benny.

In your Jan. 30 trans-Atlantic date, you asked a question... "what do they do in Turkish baths?"

I guess I tried to cover a lot of territory with the "etc.," when I said we could "bathe, etc.," in the Turkish bath.

The "etc." in this case meant being able to shave with hot water. But, for a week now there hasn't been any bath or shower facilities in the Turkish bath, because it can't get any coal to heat the water. To meet the emergency, Bill Spear and I bought an electric coil gadget, about the size of a saucer, so



This clipping is from the Hudson (Nj) Dispatch, but is probably similar to the one George Buckless found near Hoertgen.

we can have hot water for washing and shaving. I have tried taking a bath in absolutely cold water (a performance I will never repeat, believe me) and sponging myself down with a cold towel since the baths have been closed. However, today I found a solution. I know the Town Major, who incidentally is not a major but a lieutenant, and he gave me the key to his hotel room, which has a tub and plenty of hot water. [The “town major” was in charge of all civic issues for the war’s duration, in towns or cities that had been occupied by Germany and then by the Allies. For a terrific fictional account of a town major in Italy, read “A Bell for Adano” by John Hersey, which won the 1945 Pulitzer Prize.] So, from now on I won’t have to worry about keeping scrubbed like “your little boy” of honeymoon days. There must be a GI shower place around town some place, but I haven’t been able to find it. American installations are the only ones with coal, and therefore hot water. I suppose the civilians get a little coal, but it’s not very much, despite the fact that this is a coalmining sector.

Good heavens, look at all I wrote about “etc.,” in a Turkish bath.

I loved your memories in the letter of “our moment”. I’ll always treasure them, darling. I suppose everybody has that “moment” in their lives... different ways, different things, different settings. I like ours best.

Now, about the Paris blowoff. Judging by what Bob told me on the phone tonight, you must know the background of it. Starting from the beginning:

Major Goodfriend, who just became a Lt. Colonel, and the man who succeeded Llewellyn, has been writing the editorials. He wrote one supporting the National Service Act. The boys in Paris (apparently led by Bob, Bud and Benny) revolted and said no one man or more should speak for the four million soldiers in the ETO, and that the *Stars and Stripes* policy always has been “hands off” on controversial matters. By supporting the Manpower Bill, the *Stars and Stripes* would be, unofficially, stating the viewpoint of every soldier over here. And, who are we to be able to say what they think?

The editorial was held out, temporarily. A conference of the Paris staff and Goodfriend was called. The news leaked out to the civilian correspondents and they filed stories of an “uprising.” At least, that’s the second-hand information I got over the phone

Goodfriend then called a press conference of the civilian writers, the outcome of which I don’t know. Bob said he couldn’t say much on the phone but intimated that Goodfriend successfully explained his position to the writers. Bud got on the phone and said he was sending me a detailed report on the “blowoff” as he put it. I’ll get it tomorrow, and when he writes like that I can only think that possibly a lot of the fellows are ready to quit.

I’ll let you know about it tomorrow night.

And now, three big kisses, a very sweet goodnight to the most beautiful, most thoughtful, loving girl in the whole, wide world.

Goodnight, angel.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

PS: Again, don't say anything to Jane about the revolt unless Benny already has briefed her on it. He may not be part of it, but I'm sure he is.

February 8, 1945—New York

Darling,

Believe it or not we're having an early date. Mrs. K. is going to try and hit the hay early. She stayed home today... a bit under the weather, but she's all right now.

Received a letter from Lee today. She's in Lakeland, Florida with sunshine, flowers in bloom and green grass. Unbelievable. Harry has an application in at a base there and they are investigating him! Lee is a little homesick. She's lived in Massillon a long time... hasn't done all the traipsing around I've done.

We have been discussing postwar plans. Jane doesn't know what Benny wants to do... whether he wants to stay over there so she's still uncovering every possibility to go over. Red Mueller is working on it... has seen some one in the State Department and the banker Dick [indecipherable last name] called her today with a clue. We've resumed our French as of last night. The holiday sort of upset that... then, Rita being here so long, we never seemed to be able to settle down.

Gee, darling... seems as if you'd be a little perturbed at me. I wish I had the drive Jane has and the ability to know the right people, etc. I seem to be an awful stick-in-the-mud, to me anyway, and probably to Jane, too. She's not satisfied except to be continually on the go. She's amazed if now and then I manage an evening at home and she enjoys it. Don't get me wrong. I'm not trying to keep up with her. I like my evenings at home. I hate these crowds of people around here running around in circles trying to enjoy themselves. If you were here, I'd probably be right out there but somehow I don't think you'd care too much for it, either.

I'm afraid if my going overseas depended on the people I know I'd be here from now on, but somehow I have the feeling that neither of us will have to go. It would be wonderful if we could look ahead six months and see what was going to happen. The best thing and only thing I can see is to sweat it out here and hope it won't be too long. The Pacific still looms in the background making us wonder what that will involve.

The Parisian bickering between the brass and staff has come to the front in the paper this time. I'm wondering what will happen, as everyone else is. Don Hallenback of NBC was talking to Jane about it. He says it's obvious that the staff is right, that Goodfriend has no right to impose his editorials on the G.I.'s. The item in the Sun went on to say that a meeting of the staff members had been called. I'm glad you're out of that deal, at least for the time being. Jane is afraid Benny is liable to be sent to a replacement depot. The paper is too powerful to be used the way it's being used now. The paper belongs to the G.I.'s, and shouldn't be used as a sounding board for a lot of brass. Hear, hear! Mrs. K. is stating an opinion.

We're having us a blizzard. Wouldn't mind paying Lee a visit... as you probably would, too, at this stage.

I read “All Out Arlene” [Subtitle: “A Story of the Girls Behind the Boys Behind the Guns”] by H.I. Phillips this afternoon. Funny, hon. I rather enjoyed it. A lot of flag-waving in it, but not too bad.

Carl’s Eve told me that Time reopened its Paris office six weeks after it was liberated. I think I’ll stick with Time. It’s a good concern to be connected with. Eve is very much interested in the foreign publications and their distribution.

The fellows arrived in London yesterday. I think they left late Monday sometime. At least, hon, in about six months it will be your turn to come home again. Every time I think about a guy like GIBLIN being extended sixty days and his wife returning to Boston, I get annoyed very much so. I’m not complaining, darling... we had our share, I know, but...

It’s such a wonderful feeling darling, to know that I’m going to spend the rest of our lives together... the waiting seems like forever but that thought is a warm little corner in my heart. Some day we’ll be together doing little ordinary everyday things. I’m going to be content with such simple things, darling. You’ll be amazed.

I’m glad your quarters are warm and fairly comfortable. I hate your working such long hours but I know that it’s better for you. I’d love to make you comfortable. Will you let me tuck you in when you come home? We’ll take turns. You know, hon, I was getting a bit worried about not hearing from you for fear something I had said might have annoyed you, such as Jane and I going to dinner with Freddie to his sister’s apartment, or not giving you all the details of the doctor’s report when you were home... but then I thought no, you wouldn’t be like that. Then I remembered you’re being disappointed when I didn’t awaken you the night I was ill. Everything is fine now... two beautiful letters to keep me happy ‘til the next ones come along.. soon, I hope.

I’ve been rambling for quite a time now, darling. Hope you don’t mind. Jane is busy pressing and doing a bit of laundry.

If you’ll stay around a bit you can tuck me in a little while from now, and just to show you you’re forgiven for not writing as often as you think you should, I’ll come over to your house for a little while.

I’m missing you so, so much, as usual, darling. It just doesn’t make sense living without you. Perhaps I shouldn’t feel that way, but I do.

Love me, darling and miss me lots. Keep well and remember I love you so much.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

February 9, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

Kind of disturbed tonight, although I shouldn’t be. There’s no telling when this flood of mail is going to stop. You wouldn’t believe it (or, would you?) but SEVEN more letters and two Valentines from you came today. And, there were letters from Ray Roche and Sister Gertrude Jose.

The “disturbance” results from the most recently written letter of Jan. 30, in which you say there hasn’t been any mail from me in two weeks. These are the moments I wish I could pick up a phone and say.. “there are a lot en route...” but all I can do is say it this way. By the time this reaches you about three weeks will have elapsed, and the mail will have finally arrived. Doesn’t make much sense, does it?

Now that I’m down to a fairly systematic routine, I can promise we’ll be dating each other at least three, and sometimes four times a week. Or, more often, for that matter. So, when the mail doesn’t show up, just feel that it’s on the way somewhere, because it will be. I know how you must feel, despite your protests to the contrary. Why, you sit down and talk with me darn near every night, while I’ve been able to drop in only now and then.

Oh, I can’t tell you how much those letters mean, angel. Every line is filled with so much. You know so well how to express the things I like to hear. About us more than anything else, but the chatty items about Jane, Earl and Rita, Marge, Pop and Al, John and the rest. I devour every word. Believe me when I say I just swell with pride and gratitude when you talk of being so happy, so completely Mrs. Kiley; how you cling to the minutes, days and weeks of our life.

It isn’t wrong, sweetheart, to be so filled with happiness. You have wondered about that at times. I never have. It is quite natural for us to be that way. Perhaps, it seems strange because there are really so few people who have our love, our faith and our understanding.

You asked if I had to make any “adjustments” when we were married. To be perfectly frank, Billee, I never thought of making any or having to make them. When two people really and truly love each other with every fiber of their bodies, when they understand life itself, there isn’t any need for “adjustment,” or whatever other word is used to apply in the situation.

There never was any question in my mind, not for a moment, that we would have to adjust ourselves to one another. That first night we met was all that I needed to be certain I would never be happy without you, sweetheart. I have said that before, and I repeat it. If it sounds strange, it isn’t to me. There are times, I guess, when people grow to love each other after a time. I don’t suppose there is anything wrong with that, either. But I loved you with all my heart then, as now. I didn’t kiss you just for the kiss. I think I can remember the times I’ve kissed people, or girls, to be more explicit.

Yes, I was as sociable as any other kid in school when we partied. But you wouldn’t call those things displays of affection, would you? What I’m trying to say, sweetheart, is that I have never kissed anyone in my heart, except you.

Sitting here talking with you about kissing causes me to stop and think, “Why is it that people present their love, as it were, by kissing? Why not rubbing noses (we’ve done that, too, haven’t we?) or knocking their heads together...”

So, with that I say there isn’t anything wrong about us loving each other the way we do. And I can’t see why we would have to make any of those “adjustments.” We just do things, naturally, that’s all. I think, perhaps, there may be times when I’ll wonder why you do something. And you’ll wonder about me, too. But we’ll just figure it will be something that has to be done, and let it go at that. I

know you won't always have that beautiful smile shining at me. There will be moments when those eyebrows will arch. You'll be out of sorts. And I'll understand. I'll probably have my bad moments, too. Until they show up, though, I'm not worrying... are you? I thought not.

I can understand you liking Earl, 'chile (so he calls you that, too, does he?). I'm afraid, though, that he thinks I'm a better man in this business than I really am. He has told me time and again I had the best head and pair of shoulders in the whole of Stars and Stripes. He said my stories spoke right out of the pages to him, whereas none of the others even came close. Many times he has brought his stories over to me for a look before he turned them into the desk, always hoping I could point out a way to make them better. Once, he said he never had a brother but that I was the closest thing to one to him. He confided in me about his home life... how he loved Rita more than he could believe, but that he had to "adjust" himself to married life. He asked me if I had the same experience, and, feeling as I always have and do that our lives are ours alone, I simply answered, "No, I didn't."

I've gone this far without telling you about the Paris blowoff. A letter from Benny told me most of it. But I'll save it for tomorrow, along with other things in your letters. Just now my eyes are heavy (1:50 a.m.).

Before I go, though, I can tell you your letters were those of Jan 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 29. The two Valentines were cute. How do I rate three? You must be in love with your Valentine three times as much as a normal person.

So, goodnight, sweetheart. Don't forget to put that ribbon in your hair, and say your prayers. Can't tuck you in 'til that's done.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

February 9, 1945—New York

Darling,

Made my way to the Margaret Hague to visit Berta. Twins must agree with her... she's positively radiant. Still dazed and Jack doesn't quite believe it at all. He called the hospital to verify it. Grace broke the news to him and he wouldn't believe it.

I bought a lovely bouquet and took it along. I couldn't shop in time to go tonight, so I'll get something for the twins later. Anyway, I know you'd take flowers to her. I wanted roses but



The Margaret Hague maternity hospital in Jersey City was named for Hudson County Boss Frank Hague's mother. It was in existence from 1931 to 1979, during which time 350,000 babies were born there, including all 6 Kiley children.

unless I paid \$8.00 a dozen, they wouldn't be nice. Hon, don't you get any wild ideas about flowers unless you pick up a half dozen at Washington Market for me. I'd love that... to come home and find a half dozen red roses in our vase with a note tucked under them from you.

The Kennys are in a bad way with their three room apartment. They are going to try and make arrangements in the Riverside Gardens there. It'll be too bad if they have to leave the establishment entirely.

Berta remembered tonight your gift of a book, "My Son, My Son" and your addition "two for the price of one." Golly, nearly forgot they are naming them Robert and Ronald. This you will be wondering about. Jack's mother's first cousin has twins so it's on Jack's side of the family.

The news is wonderful, darling, but I'm still not being optimistic. I'll wait 'til the bitter end before I get excited.

Jane says it came over the wire this afternoon that there's to be a Congressional investigation of the paper. I'm wondering if you will be involved. I hope not, but I suppose if they have one you'll all be gathered for information. I'm anxious to see what the next few weeks will bring on that score. It's too bad something like this has to happen.

Pop was well tonight... has his usual winter cold. I haven't seen Father John since New Years. He's been going to come in to hear the Army Hour record but hasn't made it yet. He's harder to see than the president.

I missed you so much tonight having a peek at a little of the happiness we'll be sharing some day. Perhaps not on such a grand scale... I wanted to be selfish, darling. We have so much ahead of us. Jack and Berta were so wrapped up in each other's happiness, they didn't have eyes for anyone else. So we just sigh and say, our day is coming. I'll curl up on your lap and daydream in your ear a little while longer. Perhaps not for much longer. We've had some happy thoughts since the news broke yesterday that I won't repeat here. We'll just hope for the best.

I forgot to tell you how much the twins weigh. One is 5 lb, 8 oz and the other 4 lb, 12 oz. Incidentally, Berta gained just 12 pounds over her normal weight. The doctor was amazed.

At this stage, Mrs. K. is ready for the crib. Will you kindly oblige my little butterball and tuck me in nice? I miss you so, my darling, and love you that much more. Goodnight, darling.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

February 10, 1945—New York

Darling,

Almost, I couldn't write tonight but I just couldn't go to bed without being with you for a few minutes. I missed you so tonight.

I stayed late tonight at the office finishing up a few unimportant items since we have a holiday Monday but I just didn't feel like coming home. Isn't it awful?

Arriving home I found Charlie Notley here. We sat around for awhile over a couple of Manhattans (seems to be a habit) then went to Sevilla for chicken and rice. Tasted pretty good, but I've about decided I'd rather stay in, and Saturday night just doesn't seem right without you, somehow, darling.

Jane and I both washed our hair after Charlie left. Jack has gone to Phoenix to set up a new insurance office. So now we're nice and clean and we have the Sunday papers all looked over and read. Jane has already given me orders not to waken her except for the last Mass. She has a bit of a cold and isn't feeling up to par.

Believe it or not, we received December's bond addressed to 195, but still as Billee Gray. November's is missing but I'll wait a bit since I had the little bit of trouble with September and it came through in time.

I went to Lewis & Conger on my lunch hour today. They have very wonderful things for homes there... just everything you can imagine. I didn't buy anything but I did get a few ideas... such wonderful things for the kitchen and they have the nicest wicker hamper for a picnic lunch. I love picnics, don't you? I hope we can go on a lot of them.

Charlie was telling me they have lovely individual cabins at Lake Placid and Saranac Lake. I'm going to write the Chamber of Commerce at both places. She's going to get an address of a place for me in Vermont that she knows of that is quite nice. You see, hon, I'm still working on it. I'd love to find a place where I could wear blue jeans and a shirt and no shoes and no one would think I was a hillbilly.. and don't you laugh, either. It's going to be so wonderful.

Still no word from Warren as to his arrival, etc. He'll come strolling in without any special notice.

Marg is coming in tomorrow to stay over. The banks are closed on Monday. Jane's cousin, Newell Rogers, sent her two tickets for the Town Hall concert so we are to see a violinist that escaped from Germany in a vinegar barrel. That should be interesting.

You're grinning at me, darling... so cute. I just can't help loving you.

Mommy is getting most awfully sleepy. Are you ready to tuck me in? I'm afraid if I go on any more I'll just go right to sleep without being tucked in and that wouldn't be any fun.



Lewis & Conger, selling high quality housewares, operated in Manhattan for over 100 years, first on 42nd St., and then at this location, 45th and 6th Ave. The store, which closed in 1956, was known for its copper pots, which are now highly collectible.

I love you so, darling. I'd love to have you for five minutes so I could tell you that. I didn't tell you enough when I had you home. Miss me, darling and love me so much. Goodnight, darling.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

February 10, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

I'll bet that check surprised you. Bet, too, you want to know where it came from. Well, I won't tell you until you finish the letter. I have to have my fun once in a while, don't I?

More mail today. Your letter of Jan. 28 and yet another Valentine... the fourth. I liked this one best. Shows the guy who treats you rough. Apparently, you like to get treated rough. Okay, I'll show you. You'd better start running now, because if you're in sight when I get home you'll be in for it.

The news about Jack Notley getting a discharge was a surprise. I don't remember that being discussed while I was home, or was it? His observations on infidelity are right, I guess, to a certain extent. But, as you say, it's according to the kind of people who like to play. I've seen and heard enough of it to be able to have a clear picture. People are just people, that's all. If they aren't any good, they live just that way. You couldn't expect them to be otherwise. On the other hand, those who believe life is worth living the right way naturally follow that pattern. I think you know what kind of a life I lead. I just love shack bunnies when they come from Asheville and their first three names are Billee Ruth Marie.

I don't get the point on the poems, hon. Do you mean a collection for publication or just for our own scrapbook? The publication of them might develop into something but I don't know how far you (or should I say we) can get on stuff used by an Army publication, a collection of material, that is. I don't know, but I'd guess it would be a fairly small book and not worth much.

I have three letters of Lee's to answer but I'm waiting for you to send me their new address when they arrive in Florida. I see now that they'll take the kids with them.

I've waited all this time to also tell you the second package arrived today. It was the one with John's carton of cigarettes, etc. Hon, don't sent any more biscuits. They get crushed en route and are little more than dust when they get here. Also, I'm getting more candy than I can eat. So, for the time being nix on the cigarettes and candy and crackers. With the other packages on the way you can stop sending them for a while now. I'll let you know when to start up again, okay? I'm sure it is a relief knowing you don't have to try and buy cigarettes anymore. We're getting plenty of everything up here, no kidding.

Now for the check:

The Times followed up on a letter I sent a month or so ago and asked True Magazine and The March of Time how come they used the story without paying for it.

True said it called the NY office and was given permission to use it but came across with the \$50. It's a present from me to you. Go buy yourself whatever you will. It's yours.

March of Time, however, said it was “sorry but we didn’t find use for the story,” which is a base lie, naturally. I wrote to the Times tonight asking them to remind March of Time that the story was used on June 8 and credited to me, if that will refresh their convenient absent-mindedness. I also asked the woman who wrote to do me that favor and let me know the outcome. She also said she would send the copyright to Sherman Productions whenever I wanted.

I’m still waiting for Andy to get over to Paris so I can find out the score on Slesinger and go on from there.

And now, a very sweet and soft goodnight. I’m still smiling as big a smile as I can being away from your arms. But the smile is there. I’m still robust, but hard (superman, that’s me) and staying fit for you.

Say hello to Jane, and tell her for me I’m getting tired of her sleeping with you, too. Why doesn’t she take the couch and give me a break once in a while. After all, I do remember Aug. 17, 1944, which made it legal.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

February 12, 1945—New York

Darling,

We’re in the dressing room tonight. You’re in your usual place, telling me to smile. I’m wrinkling my nose at you.

I’m awfully glad we’re married, hon... so happy we both knew a good thing and hung on all those months. I’m so complete inside, belonging to you. Funny to be so miserably happy, isn’t it? It’s nearly six months since we said “I do...” for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer. A whole half-year of our lives together has gone by. Can you realize? I hope time sort of stands still when we’re together again. Darling, I never could have married anyone else. We just belong together.

What do you suppose brought this on? I miss you so, darling... so very much.

I wasn’t around last night. Marguerite was in for over night and we talked ‘til very late. Today we went shopping... Marge, not me. I did buy two jerseys for the summer to wear with shorts, but that’s all. I get discouraged looking around. I know I have to buy something to wear and everything is so expensive, darling. Seems wicked to spend so much money for something to wear.

We met Agnes later in the afternoon, then came back to 5L. They went home about seven. Jane and I had supper after they left and then went to the corner movie. Jane had been shopping Saturday and didn’t feel up to it again, so she went to the museum instead.

Yesterday and today has had a touch of spring in the air. It’s been perfect weather.

We went up to the office yesterday. Jane wanted Benny to get a note about his father in a hurry. I didn’t have time to stay because Marge was due at the apartment any minute. I met Hodenfield for

the first time. Why didn't one of you guys sit on him and shave off the scrubbing brush he wears on his upper lip? Golly, what a nasty looking thing. The fellows [at the *Stars and Stripes* New York Bureau] are on 24 hour duty now... three shifts.

Little things from the Big Three are beginning to get out. It must be great for three men to decide the fate of the world. Makes you wonder what the future will bring.



We saw "Thirty Seconds over Tokyo" tonight. You'll have to see it, darling. I couldn't begin to tell you the way I felt when I came out. I'm too confused. I'd like so much to have your ear for a little while. I think I need you to straighten me out.

Kind of thought I might have a letter... perhaps tomorrow. Guess I just look for one every day automatically... just as you do, too, probably.

I wanted a letter from Mom, too. Haven't heard from her in ages. I just paid the phone bill for my Christmas

calls. I'm just going to have to sweat out the mail from her because it costs so darn much to call her when I get worried.

I have my funny white pajamas on... all nice and fresh. My hair's not pinned up so I could snuggle up to you without sticking pins in you. Gee, darling, I hope our little pitcher looks like you. I won't even mind the Gable ears. If he has your grin I want him to be just as devilish as you were and are.

Darling, would you mind tucking me in now? I hate to leave so soon but I am tired, as usual. Kiss me nice and I'll go back to my house. Goodnight, my dearest. I love you.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

February 13, 1945—New York

Darling,

Just a line or two tonight since we have so much company around. 5L must look like Cliffords Inn tonight, since we are going to put up both Warren and Joe. I haven't exactly figured out how but I can assure you that we aren't going to flip a coin.

Warren arrived this a.m. and since he was only going to be here today, I took off. Can't blame me, can you? We sat in the Little Campus this afternoon with Joe and Warren... practically all afternoon... the fellows drinking scotch and soda and me, rye. I skipped a couple. I cooked dinner for all of us and I'm so pleased Joe cleaned his plate nearly, so that sort of redeems my failure before.

I think Joe and Warren enjoyed the afternoon talking over the London days. Joe is a little lonesome, I'm sure. Excuse this awful, awful typing but as you know that darned machine I use... the keyboard is moved over one and I have a time going back to the typewriter.

Today brought three old letters, but I was so happy to get them. Two were written in Paris... Jan. 7 and 8th and the other written on the 18th in Liege. Golly, but I was glad to hear that you received a box and especially the one with the gloves since you really needed them. I hope you can make good use of the ones that Andy is bringing to you.

Warren and I talked to Mom just a bit ago and she is fine... looking forward, of course, to Warren's arrival to finish out his furlough. 50 days this makes since his return to the ATO. Also I talked to Pop tonight. El was out. He received another Purple Heart medal for Eddie. I don't know, hon, but I don't think they should send those things after it's all over... only opens up the hurt again. I'll wait 'til Father John tells them at 195 before I say anything about the full report.

I didn't mean for the little Santa to make you unhappy, darling. I just couldn't resist him... he looked so much like our little Santa you took back.

We've been sitting around all evening talking. Jane just made coffee and we're making preparations to rig up some kind of bed for the fellows. It will seem strange to have men around here.

At this point, darling, we have just made up the window seat along side of the sofa as a bed. I'm not sure that it's going to work... Whether or not Joe or Warren will end up wandering around all night as Jane did.

At least, hon, there is never a dull moment around here... but we haven't had to bunk anyone as yet, until now. I don't mind, though, darling. I really feel like an auxiliary now.

I forgot to mention that we are having another blizzard... I've forgotten how many this is at this point... but it was too awful for Joe to go out to Queens. We only had to twist his arm once to stay.

I just wonder what you might do if I were to arrive in Liege and when evening came... just casually say, "Goodnight... nice to have you back again." Somehow or other I don't think I could even tease



Elizabeth and Warren Gray at Billee and Charles' wedding, Jersey City, August 1944.

you, darling. I'd probably stay snuggled up to you since it's so cold and you wouldn't be able to send me back to my house.

I felt like dancing up 14th Street again with three unread letters in my bag... I couldn't wait to get to work.

Somehow, darling, I can't imagine you with a couple of days growth of beard. Just doesn't sound like you. Still, I'd like to see you, beard and all... oh, so much if only for five minutes. They are playing your Irish lullaby. I'll sing you to sleep every night, hon, if you'll just come home.

I think Joe is expecting something big since they put him on 24 hour duty. He simply reeks optimism... makes us feel so good but still, we are being very cautious with our feelings.

We had lunch with Jane in Louis' today... you remember? Across from the AP building.

I hadn't realized I was a bit homesick for someone that belonged to me 'til I saw Warren getting off the bus. Funny how much family can mean. I am so happy to see him... to talk with him. He looks wonderful and I think he likes what he's doing.

This letter sounds terribly disjointed. I don't seem to get the chain of thought you do when you type a letter as I do when I write longhand. That's why I can go on indefinitely and it seems to make more sense to me and possibly to you, too.

I think I'd better close at this point.

I didn't realize that I was running off the page so soon. That's what comes of not using one of these things for so long. Will you forgive your sorta useless wife?

Gosh, hon, I just read this darn thing over and I can see where there is going to be a lot of pen and ink corrections... 'scuse, please. I knew you would.

Warren just came out in Jane's pajamas. Joe is to wear some blue ones. Gosh only knows... oh well. It's fun.

I wish you were here to enjoy this... you'd laugh at us I know.

You'll have to wait to tuck me in tonight since I have to take a shower. Joe has taken over the bathroom now. I could almost think you might be jealous. I'd be, I know.

Darling, I love you so much and miss you ten times more, if that's possible. Keep the letters coming, darling, and love me lots. Warren is going to enclose a note with this.

I just can't help but laugh, hon, at Warren in Jane's pajamas. Yours are soiled so I couldn't offer them to Warren or Joe.

I'll be back tomorrow to write a nice letter with just the two of us for company. Kiss me goodnight. I'm still waiting for the story on the three kisses.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

PS: Every letter makes me realize how much more I miss you and love you... not that I didn't know it before, of course. I'd give a lot for just five minutes to see... to tell you just simply, I love you, darling.

[Joe Fleming to Charles] Apartment 5L

Dear Charlie,

Mrs. Brautegan [Warren's nickname] and I are spending the evening with Billee and Jane and in return for their hospitality... certainly not in return for any letter of yours... I'm writing this.

Billee has shown great improvement in her cooking since I ate here last and although she has not yet reached the standards expected by a patron of Mancy's, she should make a good cook with a little practice and coaching.

Her left is improving, too, but I am sorry to report that she can not counterpunch yet and she goes down for the count after a good uppercut.

My tour of duty will be up soon and I should be back to the ETO in a little while. The other day I got a letter from DeSanchez asking when I'd be back. I said the first month without an "R" in it and signed it, the oyster lover.

Life on the home front is just what you said it was and just what Hutton said it was and what I knew it would be. In other words, it hasn't changed any.

Give my love to Bill Spier and Max Gilstrap and Walter Smith and all the other fellows up in Liege.

Cheers, Joe

[Note: Warren's letter is scanned but it is utterly indecipherable, at least by me.]

February 14, 1945—New York

Hello, darling,

May I sit on the edge of your desk for a bit and talk? I'll try not to bother you too much. They'll be calling you the "eager beaver" instead of Father John.

We just received word via Joe that 38 guys from the S&S are being sent to replacement depots. Evidently they are not concerned in the present controversy but are from the business offices. Moora is being sent out in the field. That's certainly getting rid of him, and Benny is doing American rewrite. Joe said that Cal Forshing is on the way over to put the finger on Goodfriend... one of the reasons for his trip. Evidently this David guy is the white-haired boy where Goodfriend is concerned. What a beautiful mess. I hope, darling, you aren't going to be involved.

Jane is very much upset, of course. Benny would be at a loss in a replacement depot. Seems a shame they are turning away good talent that's needed just for the sake of politics. We'll just have to see what happens. Joe says you won't be involved. I don't know.

Enough of S&S for now, darling... seems as if it's getting the wires, too, but this is the first time we've really been able to share almost first hand in the furor caused... none have been like this that I've heard of.

I still get amused over last night and Joe and Warren. You would have died... Jane told Joe he was going to take a shower. He was just as unconcerned in Jane's blue pajamas and white satin mules as he is in his combat jacket.

You're liable to get a report from the apartment that we're shacking up... I never thought a thing about it 'til Joe and I got in the elevator this morning to go downstairs. The elevator operator raised his eyebrows... the old man. Jane thought of it, too, going down with Warren a half-hour later. As Jane said, it was like a boarding house slumber party, except we had an ex-tail gunner and the New York chief of the S&S. I'm only sorry you weren't here because it was so funny.

I was first up and made breakfast. Warren got an early bus. He wanted to get to Washington in time to make a seven o'clock train home. It was swell having him here. He looks very well, too... better than last August. I wonder when I'll see him again now. Mom will be glad to see him even if it's only been since Christmas.

I have an idea Mom will always keep the house. I'll be awfully surprised if she sells. If you'd like our first Xmas here that's were it will be. I'd spend it anywhere as long as you were there to say Merry Christmas, sweetheart... just imagine waking up on a Christmas morning with you beside me. Just couldn't think of anything nicer.

Darling, do you have trouble reading my letters? Warren says he has an awful time. I know it's pretty bad... I'll use the typewriter if you want me to.

I was so happy to hear that your hands are all right... and don't you be telling me if they aren't. Too, I'm glad you won't need any of that awful cough medicine.

You're probably seeing Andy now. Morro called Jane today and wanted us to go to dinner Friday evening. Earl never mentioned your watch but he's due in a few days and I'll ask him.

I'd like to write more, darling, but this is all the paper I have tonight. I'll have to get more tomorrow. I'll tell you tomorrow what happened to our evening tonight. There's never a dull moment at 5L... but it's good that we don't get in a rut.

Love me lots, darling and tuck me in nice. Don't be worrying about the S&S too much. You can't help it, I know. I'm worrying too, wondering what will happen. Keep well and remember I love you so and miss you even more.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

February 14, 1945—Liege

Dear Ray,

I can sleep a little later than usual tomorrow, so I'm staying late tonight, trying to catch up on my back mail, and what a pile to catch up on. You're first on the list.

Your letter of January 13, received about a week ago, was warming. You don't have to worry about me taking it any more, Ray. I think I can take almost anything now. That is, just about anything

except what might happen to Billee. That may sound strange, Ray, but at least I think that's the way it would be. She often says she is glad she has me to lean on, that she hadn't before ever felt really settled with something worthwhile to live for and look forward to. But I wonder if she will ever know how much strength she has given to me.

This is getting off on a tangent I didn't mean to follow, but as long as I've gone this far, I'll go all the way.

Like an average human, I have thought at times that I was a step-child in God's world. I can't think of any harm I ever brought to anybody. I've worked hard. I have done, and do, my level best to walk the straight and narrow path He paved, and I do it because I want to, not because I'm supposed to do it. I live up to the standards of society. But, the best years of my life, as I see it, have been halved, and I haven't much in a material way to show for it.

But, then I think of how much I do have, in Billee, and in what's left of us, and that more than balances the scale.

I still haven't heard anything more about Ed, other than the report I sent to you. You may hear where he's buried before I do, but I'll never stop trying to check until I do find out.

I've started to send the Liege editions to you, beginning with the first edition. I'd advise you to get those you do have bound without the missing copies because I doubt if I'll ever get them now. Keep me posted on how you get the Liege papers, though.

The job here continues to work out well. The hours are still long, 1 p.m. to about midnight, but we gradually are cutting down time on lots of things. I had a day off last week, and there will be another tomorrow. However, I'll be in tomorrow afternoon and start work on V-Day preparation pages together with a special supplement when Berlin is taken. I'll have plenty of time to work on those and will do it in stages.

I'm still turning out the sports page and making up most of the others. I want to get on the news desk, but can't find anybody capable enough to take over sports. When I do, I'll move in behind Bill Spear, present managing editor, and take over his job when and if he goes to New York or moves on to another edition. That's my plan, but it hinges on getting someone, or two, to turn out a decent sports page.

I've worked in a lot of new stuff on the sports page here. I'm getting New York to cable guest columns by writers from all over the country. I introduced the sports Question Box in all editions and it has gone over big.

Received a cable yesterday from Billee, saying Berta had twins! Holy cow, and the doctor told her she'd be taking a "dangerous risk" by having children.

El and Bette have been writing regularly and, of course, Billee comes through darn near every day with something. Last week I had 18 in four days from her. Now, it has settled down to at least one, and sometimes two, a day.

You said in your letter that you were working hard. Listen, take it easy, you'll last longer. I know how much you want to give the kids, but remember you can space it out over a longer period of time. There'll be lots more after them, you know.

Let's hear from you, when you aren't in whatever-that-room-is-called-where-the-kids-hang-out.

K.

February 14, 1945—Liege

Evening, Valentine

You are looking especially beautiful tonight. Those big eyes shining just as bright... the wrinkle of your nose cuter than ever. I wish I could just reach out and grasp that dream, hold it so close. I'll wait, though, sweetheart, because the real thing will be so much better than the dream.

This is our first date in three nights. I knew you would be tapping that foot of yours if I didn't come around tonight. Not that I felt I had to, mind you. Just that I wanted to taste those lips again. I can go only so long without nourishment, then I just have to satisfy my hunger for your kisses.

You were a perfect Valentine. Yesterday you came with a letter and the fourth (or is it fifth) Valentine. And, today there were two more letters. Yesterday's was the one of Feb. 2, and evidently brought over by Carl or Andy since it didn't have a postmark on it. Today... oh, I'm sorry, there were three letters, not two. How did I ever make that mistake? They were those of Jan. 31, Feb. 3 and 4. So, you see they made as good time as the boys did.

I talked with Andy on the phone yesterday. He said he and Bud were coming up this way tomorrow or the next day. Andy will work in the field out of First Army (which is in our sector) and Bud will just roam around until the Pacific deal develops. (No news of me-to-Russia). Carl is staying in Paris doing a little bit of everything, I guess. And, incidentally (between us) Bob and Benny were chastised for their part in the revolt last week. Bob was removed (again) as head of the news bureau and put in charge of America copy only. Benny was put back as picture editor for Paris only. He's way down in the dumps, judging by his tone on the phone. I hope he doesn't pass his feelings on to Jane. I believe in pulling no punches but from what you tell me, he just isn't sparing anything. In fact, he's probably making it out to be worse than it is. I admire both he and Bob for what they did, though. I would have spoken up with them had I been there. The one big conference we had while I was there enabled me to speak my piece on a few things and nothing happened to me. Maybe it's all in how you do it.

I'm anxiously awaiting the wool vest. But, hon, please... pretty please... if you spend one more thin dime on me I'll... so help me I won't wrinkle my nose for you any more. I have two pairs of gloves now, four sweaters, a leather jacket a Canadian wool jacket, a GI field jacket, the officer's raincoat, plenty of hankies, and just everything. I have received two packages and when the others get here I'll be so snowed under I won't know what to do with it all. I love you millions for it, precious patty-cake (Wow, where did I get that one?) but don't send anything else for awhile. The vest was a good idea,

hon. With all I have it will be good... ideal in fact to wear under my jacket and around the office. Too, I'll have it when I drop the rank and assume Mr. Kiley again.

Your cable about Berta came yesterday, too. I can't get over it, honestly. Some doctor, I'm sure, told her she would be taking a "dangerous risk" by having any more children... and she hits the jackpot, yet. I laughed at the way you worded the cable... "making three strikes on us suggest homecoming."

Okay, so I struck out my first time at bat. But listen, that guy Stork, or whatever his name is, isn't going to throw curves all the time, and as soon as he tries to slip a fast one across those outfielders are going to run their legs off chasing the hit I get.

I know, my batting eye wasn't very sharp, but you must realize I had to go into the game ice cold. No spring training in Lover's Lane (or on the porch of the Grove Park Inn), two and half years of war, which is going to cool off any good hitter. I'll bet DiMaggio doesn't knock the fences down when he gets back in the game again.

I'm taking into consideration, too, that I was up at the plate for three and half months. But gee, darling, that's not very long in this league. That guy Stork is some pitcher. Why, he'll be in the Hall of Fame, if he isn't there already. Everybody knows how hard it is to get a hit off him. Look at all those no-hitters he has thrown.

Just you wait and see when the next inning comes around. I'll put a little resin on my hands, get a firm grip, a toe-hold at the plate, and I'll scatter ball players all over the lot.

I'm not so bad as that (as I pointed out in a letter to Al and Dot tonight). Look at those 80-year olds you hear of now and then beating out a bunt up in the hills of Kentucky. Yes, I know you'll say they probably had some help from the iceman. But the records credit them with the hit. And the day I can't out hit an 80-year old it will be a frosty Friday, believe me.

I've written to the Doyles, 195 and John... my eyes are awfully heavy. Got a day off tomorrow, no fooling, and I'll be back with you, angel. I'm coming in late in the afternoon and start work on preparation pages for V-Day and the fall of Berlin.

Golly, you'll have to tuck me in tonight, I'm that tired. Yep, 2 a.m.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

February 15, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

You haven't seen one of these for a long time, have you? Well, you will be receiving a lot more of them, now. Of course, you will have to be a little patient until I can get used to writing instead of typing.

Andy and Bud arrived here today... Andy with the wool vest, super gloves and stationery.

This also was my day off, and what better way to spend it than coming over to be with you.

We have lots to talk about, too. So, suppose we start with a couple of items which can be dealt with now, and be forgotten. I don't like to think of them, let alone talk of them.

Talking with Andy and Bud, separately, enabled me to discuss those things you mentioned.

Andy was a little puzzled. I asked him point blank what he had in mind when he said what you reported. When it became clear in his mind what I meant, he immediately said there must have been a terrible misunderstanding. He said he wasn't serious about what he said, and in any case it only pertained to Ben's many messages to Jane via cable. He was sincere, I'm sure. He said he was sorry to have given you that impression, especially at a time like that when you were upset about Eddie.

Now, for Bud.

Sitting together at dinner, out of earshot of everyone, I asked him to think before answering. Had he ever discussed you and I with other people in any way that I would resent. He looked at me first, as though I was talking in riddles, then asked me to go on with the story. I simply repeated the same question, which brought the reply that if he didn't know me better he would be tempted to "blow his top." I told him I was very serious, that it meant more than conversation to me. To that he replied that if he ever had taken part in such a conversation with anyone he could not recall it, then added that he was sure he never had said anything about me that he couldn't tell me to my face... that he had only the "best feelings and thoughts about you and Billee." Moreover, he said he was more than a little hurt to think that I would think that of him.

I could only take the big goof at his word, although I'm not entirely satisfied.

So much for acting like a kid, although I was determined to get those things settled.

It's my turn now to give you a picture of our date tonight. I'm home early... 10:30... in my flannel 'jamas, blue robe and slippers. Bill won't be in until about one a.m., so we'll be alone for quite awhile.

I needed a little more atmosphere of you around, so I put your hanky in my breast pocket. That's the special one with the L'Heure Intime on it. Most every night I sniff it before going to bed. Still has a strong fragrance, too. Try putting a spec on one of your letters, sweetheart.

Andy told me of meeting you in Macy's... and, darling, the vest and gloves are terrific. When he showed the gloves to me I had to remark you must have thought I was going to Russia in a couple of days.

So, don't you ever say I was extravagant in buying anything for you.



Vintage ad for Heure Intime. Launched in 1933, the perfume is still being made.

As I said last night, angel, I have so much stuff now I don't know what to do with it. I know I won't need anything else for years and years. That doesn't mean I'm going to be Sgt. Kiley that long, but I do have an awful lot of equipment.

I had to pass the gloves around the office, and of course, everyone said if I ever went near the front with them it would be a sure tip-off I was a 4F on the loose.

Andy also said he was sorry he didn't spend more time with you. The reason was that, while he liked Jane a lot, her spirited characteristics made him uncomfortable and to avoid saying something he would be sorry for, he thought it best not to see too much of her.

He likes you, though. He said that, next to Marg, you're the nicest girl he knows, which is supposed to be a compliment.

Latest news from Paris... Bob is going to be kicked around again, sent out in the field for some kind of a job. Benny stays in Paris but only to edit pictures. Bud is waiting for the Pacific orders and Andy is going to work up near here with First Army.

Haven't made much love to my angel tonight, have I? I didn't think it would take me all this time to talk about other things.

With nothing much to do around here, I was in the office this afternoon, saw "Rhapsody in Blue" at the U.S. movie tonight and came home. Andy and Bud went to the 9th Air Force press camp about 15 miles away, to spend the night but will be back tomorrow.

And now it's time for Mummy to tuck her weary old man in bed. Kiss him tenderly and put the lights out... oh yeah?

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

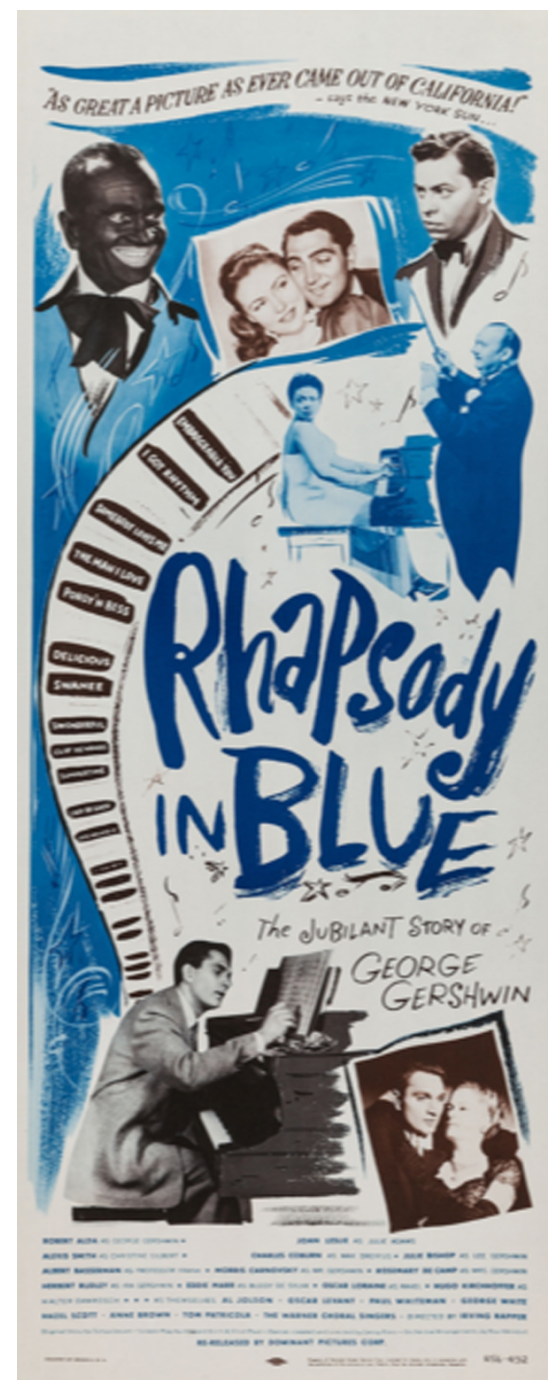
February 17, 1945—New York

My darling,

I hope you'll be able to stand me for a little while because I'm in a foul mood. I'd like to take the S&S auxiliary at New York and pitch it all in the East River.

I'm sorry, but I've had about all I can take for one week. I'm mad because they've all kept me from being with you and I wanted so to spend tonight with you.

I'd better go back and start this in chronological order so you'll know what I'm talking about. The last time I was able to write was Wednesday evening when I related how Warren, Joe and I spent the evening in the Little Campus and then home, etc. Wednesday, Jane



and I were to go to see Alison & Johnson [could not verify this spelling]. We were relieved of that by selling our tickets in the lobby to a sailor and his girl... never could figure out how Jane bought the tickets or why. We came home and spent a quiet evening at home... seems a year ago. That same night Joe called and broke the S&S story about the 38 men etc.. Of course, immediately Jane became Benny, so you know what went on. I probably reacted as you would have... funny, isn't it?

Thursday, Marg and Joe came down to discuss all the angles over rye and soda. Friday, Morrow was to take us all to dinner. We met at the office but no Morrow. It seems he wasn't in condition to come to work so we realized he couldn't possibly take us out. It ended up with Hoe, Marg, Jane and I all going out to dinner. We still had some liquor left so decided to come home instead of going to a bar. After sitting around for an hour or so, Morrow called wondering what happened to us!! He stumbled down to 5L and I mean stumbled... I think he's liberating New York.

Never, darling, in all my life have I seen anyone so saturated with liquor. He was quiet and painfully polite but so, so drunk. "Libby has gone away with her boss somewhere for the weekend..." was what he told us. Evidently she's only been with him about three days since he's back. It isn't our place to judge since we don't know the facts, but I'll be damned if I'd let you run around in that state. It's too bad... I feel sorry for both of them. The poor guy looked as if he hadn't shaved or changed clothes since he left Paris. His long johns were hanging out of his sleeves... shirt open and that talked about kerchief tied around his neck... the parachute but no helmet.

Joe carried him home but he got out this morning before he awakened and must have found another bar. Anyway, Joe kept him from being AWOL today but tomorrow is going to be another story... since he's officially assigned to AWS.

He was to come down tonight... called us about seven and it's now two-thirty and we haven't seen him.

I was expecting a nice quiet evening tonight, but arrived home to find Joe, Marg and Charlie Notley here. Marg, Joe and Jane had been together all afternoon drinking lunch. When we learned Morrow wasn't to come we quick hopped up something to eat thinking it would help him, so then we had to eat. To top the evening off, Francie the gal that hopped the fireplugs, showed up along with Paul Alley and some very Hollywood-looking movie director. At that stage I was ready to find a nice quiet spot on the roof and just forget the whole thing.

At the present time, Jane and Marg are rehashing the evening.

It's one heck of a way to spend a six month anniversary. Do you mind? It's just that I'm so sick of looking at liquor bottles and mixing drinks. I'll be all right tomorrow... don't mind me too much.

Darling, your super sincere letter was waiting for me Thursday night... the one you wrote on the 5th. Three long typed pages and I love every line even if you did make me blush. Speaking of blushing, you must have turned a nice pink shade or else the keys on your typewriter sort of melted away from the glow. To tell you the truth, I was shocked but I love being shocked by you. No one ever kicked the baseball language around that way... beautifully done. I loved that you must have gotten the

wrong pointers during your stay in St. Louis. You're shameless. I didn't blush, then I made my rather naive statement: "perhaps we tried too hard."

At this stage of the game I would love to put my coat on and have you take me home around the corner to 309. I'm so weary, hon, and I miss you so.

I'll be back tomorrow to write more to you. You will excuse the mood I'm in. I've just had too many people and smoke-filled rooms and I'd love a breath of fresh country air and you, darling... so much of you. Please, what is this three little girl business and their Daddy tucking them in? Doesn't register. It only registers that I love you so and that after six months I know I'm going to love being Mrs. K. I'm so happy and thankful for you, darling that I just forget everything else but Mr. & Mrs. . and what a wonderful life we're going to have.

There's a very special anniversary kiss on the way. Will you cuddle me up close, before you tuck me in? I love you.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

February 17, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart

And, a very happy anniversary to you, too. Doesn't it feel wonderful to be a six-month veteran of married life? Somebody in Washington ought to propose legislation which would allow married men to wear stripes on their sleeves, like we wear the overseas stripes. One for every six months. I don't know what we would look like after 40 or 50 years, but I'd bet it would be fun.

I'm trying something new tonight, angel... writing in the office while others are working around me. I finished at 10, earlier than usual, but Bill and the others are still working on the Pacific and Russia stories.

I had some mail today, darling. From you, too, as a sort of anniversary present. In your Feb. 4 letter you said you hadn't received any more than one letter from me in three weeks. I checked as far as I could from this end and failed to find a reason, unless the delay is general.

You know I'm not that busy that I wouldn't write at least twice a week. I still write only when I want to talk with you, and while that is every day, it sometimes happens that I just have to put it off for a day or two... certainly not any more.

I asked Andy what Slesinger was doing with my story and his answer was that he was under the impression Slesinger was trying to sell it for me.

Impatient as I am, I asked him to write Slesinger, thank him for his efforts and sell the damn story for \$200, or whatever Sherman is offering now. I get nervous just worrying about it.

Today's letters were those of Feb. 5 and 9. Service is getting better. Oh, yes... there was another Valentine! It can't be that you want to be absolutely certain there isn't another woman in my life.

That makes five, or is it six? I'll have to count back. I love you so, so much for each of them, sweetheart.

The latest Pegler and Parker clippings were swell, too.

Oh, I wish I was with you when you visited Berta, hon. I enjoy so much seeing other people happy and I know she and Jack must be.

If I had been with you, I suppose I would have insisted on a dozen roses, but I'm sure your bouquet more than suited the occasion.

It's good to hear you talk of 195, angel. And I know what you mean when you say it's "nice to be one of the family." It's a good family... the best.

You said you wanted to see me shave some time. Okay, it's a date. The very first day I return, you may watch me shave. Of course, you'll laugh at some of the funny faces I make, but your wish is my command. Women are awfully curious, aren't they? I'll probably cut myself in a dozen places, too.

I received the stamps all right. I can get what I need in the A.P.O. here, but will be able to use those you send. That doesn't mean you have to send some in every letter, now. About once a month will be plenty. You said you were cutting down on expenses because of too much money being spent socially.

I believe you are spending it all on me. You just keep on spending it on yourself, and that's an order!

And now, I've saved this until last because I want to stand in front of you, cross my arms, tighten my lips and ask... "How come?" It has to do with your recollection of the varied, and somewhat scattered, beds we've slept in.

I followed you through every one you mentioned. The Lexington, Aunt Kee's, "my room" at 412, the hotel in Richmond, the Grosvenor, 195, 309, North Arlington and 5L.

I marveled, darling. You remembered them all... but one!

I thought... my dream is shattered. My ideal is crushed. How could she forget? No, it wasn't possible. Hurriedly, I re-read the list, again and again. I went over it carefully, word by word.

Alas, yes she had forgotten. This is the end, I thought.

Then, a thought occurred to me that it hadn't happened at all. Perhaps it was my dream. But, no. It was too real.

I made one last study of the list, before making my decision. Oh, there it was. Her words were... "we slept in an array of beds."

I had made a terrible mistake. So, you'll have to forgive me, for misjudging you. I should have known you were right. We did only sleep in those you mentioned.

As I recall, we did not sleep in that hotel in Flushing on Thanksgiving Day!

Shall I hide my head in the corner, now?

Naturally, I have been interrupted several times since I first called on you, Mrs. K. I started this at 10:45 and it is now 1:20 a.m. That's time for anybody to go to bed, isn't it? That is, except for my first week home again. I'm going to lay awake all night and just look at that pretty face of yours.

With your permission, I'll remove you from my lap now, carry you to bed, tuck you in and kiss you three times, before telling you... I love you.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

February 19, 1945—New York

My darling,

I didn't pay you a visit last night... too darned tired. We hit the sack early.

I was up pretty early yesterday for going to bed so late. The dishes were stacked to the ceiling, glasses and just a general mess all over. We cleaned it all up... Jane went back to bed and I to ten o'clock Mass and Jersey City.

I carried the Molotoff transcription over. Pop was so pleased to hear it. I wish Father John would take enough time to hear the Army Hour record and bring Pop with him. I haven't seen him since New Year's Day... with Lent now he'll be even busier.

Annice is getting so big and putting words together. She's such an adorable child. She's cutting more teeth and didn't feel so good yesterday. We read the papers together last evening. She awakened and we brought her downstairs and she seems so content just to have me hold her.

We took pictures and I baked a cake for them yesterday afternoon. I'm not eating any sweets during Lent. I baked the cake and sat and watched El eat it... she said it was good, but I couldn't say. We're going to surprise Bette on her birthday.

I was able to get identical little sacks (jackets) for the twins in blue, of course. They are all wrapped and ready to send. I'll wait 'til they get a little more settled before I go see them.

Received a postcard from Warren... he arrived in Asheville OK and is spending the rest of his leave there.

Also, a letter from Mr. & Mrs. Hobbs in England came today. I'm enclosing it for you to read. Nice of him to answer, although I didn't really expect one.

There's never a dull moment at the S&S. What I was afraid of has happened. Libby is divorcing Morrow. The poor guy is so broken.. that's the cause of his going off the deep end. I guess she greeted him with that. I'm not one to judge... but there's just one thing I can't understand... why she didn't prepare him for it instead of waiting 'til he came home. He's trying to change places with Joe so he can return in a few weeks instead of staying out his 60 days. He came over yesterday while I was away... somewhat sobered. Jane walked him all over New York then took him to the office. The A.N.S. [Army News Service, which operated the Stars and Stripes New York Bureau] sent him home

today. Maybe I'm wrong but I sure couldn't do some of the things I've heard this week. Libby went with Morrow to one of the hotels to get a room for him. It's an awful mess. I wish we weren't being involved but, gee, somebody has to help the guy. He doesn't seem to have any friends except the S&S. Oh, well...let's forget this now... painful subject.

Jane received a letter from Benny today... not too good. The mess in Paris is sort of given a once over. He mentions someone who was sent to a replacement depot.

I'm still reading your letter that I got last Thursday, and I have to laugh all over at your baseball "lingo." Very wonderful, darling. You are, too.

I must tell you this, hon... it's funny. Freddy's sister called me the other night about a job she heard about... secretary to a woman doctor. I met the friend of the doctor today, who I guess sort of gave me the once over and approved, and gave me the doctor's number. This is the laugh... the doctor must be one of the staff members of the Planned Parenthood Federation. That's what the phone number is anyway. I fairly hooted when I learned what the number was. That has been Margaret Sanger's little crusade for gosh knows how long.

For the fun of it I'm going to have the interview. She's to be in on Wednesday. Freddy's sister had no idea what it was 'til I told her tonight on the phone. She thought it a good joke. Can you imagine them hiring me with my aspirations and couldn't you just hear Father John. That might be one way to educate us, hon, with a few revisions. Now I'm as shameless as you.

The news is good tonight again. We sure are on top on all the fronts now. It just can't go on too much longer.

We practically took the apartment apart tonight. After all the company last week and our once over lightly method for such occasions, it was really awful.

I was wondering last night if it might not be better for Pop to know the full report on Eddie. I can see that he thinks about it a lot and there must be a lot of questions in his mind that the report would answer. I think there would be a little consolation in the fact that he went the way he did... quickly, and he wasn't hit by the shells. Perhaps it would give him a little peace of mind. Father John decided not to tell him, you know.

Darling, I am missing you so... more than ever this last week. I hope my letters aren't giving the impression that Mrs. K. has been going around in a drunken stupor this last week. On the contrary, I was so busy being bartender I was left way behind. I just wouldn't care to see any liquor for a long time.

Here's an item of interest. Benny's brother and Jean, the girl he was with here, were married this weekend. He told his Dad today and he called us.

Speaking of funny things... did you ever hear the story Joe tells about Carl picking up the French girls and taking them home with him? His bed was only big enough for Carl so he'd made the girls sleep in the chair all night. I'm so dumb... he just doesn't look the type.

Did I tell you True Magazine called and wanted the date the S&S used the story? I wonder what that could mean. Steve S. still isn't back. I'll give his secretary another ring tomorrow.

I very nearly forgot. The income tax representative came around today and fixed our forms. Guess what? We're having \$53.17 returned! I'm still not sufficiently recovered. Isn't that amazing? I'll add \$25 to it and buy a bond.

Your letter was so good about what you are doing.. the baseball team and us. Who could ask for more? This last week has made me more grateful than ever that I'm Mrs. K. Please, darling, take good care of yourself and remember I love you so, so much.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

February 21, 1945—New York

Darling,

Did you miss me last night? I wasn't around and I wanted to be... but too darn many things are happening.

It isn't very nice and I'm getting tired of trying to find a solution to the problem. It's Morrow, of course. Libby has shed any responsibility she might have had and just as much as told us it was up to us to carry the ball. I don't understand her at all. From what she told Jane, she had planned all along that she would divorce him... but still she spent three days with him here. On the third day, he met one of the group on the Tribune and got tight. She used that as the excuse to tell him, so of course, he just kept on drinking. He went to his mother's in West Virginia on his furlough. Don't know about his behavior there, but in the interim before he came home Libby went to stay with a girlfriend and of course, he started right over again drinking. Poor Doe is in a spot. They did succeed in switching Earl to A.N.S. to take Morrow's place. Yesterday he was a little sober and we had Joe, Marg and him for dinner. I thought a little normal atmosphere might benefit him and apparently it did for a bit. Joe went home to stay with him and he got up sometime in the night and proceeded to get good and stiff.

He was swell last night... as nice as could be. He told me all about you and Cherbourg. You seem to be his favorite. He said the days he spent at Cherbourg with you were his happiest in the army.

He told us how you managed to get a decent place for them in the billet and how you managed the door knob deal. I can just see you making your way through Paris carrying your door knob around.

At this point I don't know what will happen to Morrow. Unless he can help himself a little the cause is lost because he's heartbroken over Libby.

Enough of that. We've all seen so much of it this past week. I don't see how he manages to stay on the S&S if he was like this. You can go just so long with this and no longer.

We're all going to Rita and Earl's tomorrow for dinner. I'm worried about Rita and how she's going to handle us all. She was so helpless in our kitchen.

I asked Earl about the watch and he has it, so I'll get it tomorrow and have it repaired for you. I'll have to send it back with Hodenfield I guess. He's the next to go. Joe's orders were extended 60 days.

You know, I think Joe likes us. You should see him tooting around with Marg, Jane and I.

You know, I'm surprised. I didn't make you the least little bit jealous going to dinner with Freddie and Jane. Now I know I'm married.

Believe it or not... more snow last night and today. It's just awful.

Darling, I got my cold from sitting in the office with wet shoes on and resting them on a cold cement floor. I've gotten along pretty well with the coat situation. Truth is, hon, I haven't been able to find one I'd like.

Marg, Jane and I had dinner at Sevilla, the Spanish place. Joe is coming down with a cold so he wasn't in good shape to be taking us around everywhere.

The one item so sad about Morrow is he has no money, so he's been staying at their apartment.

I wish you were here to talk to... to sort of straighten me out. Perhaps you could do something with Morrow.

I was so provoked today after we were all practically standing on our heads last night to go out and do it all over again.

This isn't much of a letter, hon, but I'm tired. Tuck me in nice. I love you so darn much. Take the best of care of you for me.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

February 24, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart

My excuse for using the typewriter tonight is that I have so much to talk with you about that I wouldn't get it all in one letter if I used my pen. Actually, I'd much prefer the pen. I have that "wanna-be-with-my-angel" feeling something awful.

Since you already have looked at the picture and read the clipping, we had better talk about them first. The picture was taken in Paris a couple of months ago by a friend of Earl's, Katherine "Sooky" Littlejohn. She's something like a Red Cross gal, only she belongs to what is called "Camp Hostesses." Awfully nice girl. Right now she's working as a nurse in Paris because of the shortage of nurses over here. Earl looks like he's cold, which he probably was. I don't know what I look like. I sure in hell don't look like your little boy does when he wakes up in the morning.

The clipping is from the Paris *Stars and Stripes*. [This story has not been identified.] I thought maybe you knew these characters from Elyria. How'd you like me to pull something like that on you? Okay, but don't squint those eyes and tighten your lips at me.

I've had to stay away from you for what seems to be an awfully long time this week, darling. It must have been real early in the week since I last called on you, probably Tuesday. But, since this is Saturday we can make up for a lot of lost time and spend all night with each other. Gee, I can say that without blushing now. Time was (and not too long ago) when I'd have to be careful not to give Billee Gray the impression I was getting fresh.

During the week you have been with me plenty, though. Your letters made up for everything I wasn't able to do. Those received were the ones of Feb. 7, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 14, plus the anniversary cable, bless your heart. The cable was sweet, beautiful. The Feb. 13 "bit" also included letters from Joe and Warren. There was another Vmail from Warren today, written in Amarillo.

Hon, I can't get over Giblin's wife going back to Boston. That IS one for the books. I've heard a lot about those frigid Back Bay Boston gals, and she must be one of those whose temperature is below zero. Can you imagine yourself packing up and leaving me for a job? I wouldn't care if neither of us had a dime, if we only were together. Oh well, like they say... it takes all kinds of people to make up a world.

About the book Andy and Hutton are writing... Andy told me about it when he came back. Seems Slesinger ran into a deal in Hollywood, whereby a couple of studios wanted someone to write the script for a picture on the *Stars and Stripes*. Bud immediately got the idea to kill two birds with one stone... book and picture... and he and Andy are supposed to be working on it. How far they have progressed, I don't know. To tell the completely honest story about the Stars and Stripes would be to write something that wouldn't be publishable... too many derogatory things about brass... too many people to cover. Perhaps they have a better angle... without telling the whole story, just the brighter side of it. If they go through with it they'll probably do a better job than anybody else. I still couldn't sit down and write that much. I'm not lazy, just don't have the capacity for it.

You said Jane was worried about Benny. Listen, she doesn't have to worry. There isn't any possibility of him going to any replacement depot. Bob's being sent out in the field is not completely unfair. He dug his own grave, in more ways than one. Way back in London he was on the bottle too much. Everybody stuck with him out of friendship. In France, it was the same way. Men began to lose confidence in him. He was out of the office more than he was in. He was kicked off the Paris desk, eventually, because he took off at 9:30 one night when the German breakthrough was at its height. He left David in charge. when Goodfriend and visiting brass paid us a visit Bob was nowhere to be found. Goodfriend immediately told Bob he was through and put David on the desk temporarily, pending his ability to carry the load.

Personally, I don't like David. He'll do what he's told and anything else that will please Goodfriend, regardless of what it means to the paper. But, I'll give him credit. He took over and messed things up at first, but gradually got them straightened out. Bud could have taken over when Bob was kicked out but he was too busy pleasing himself in the field. When David became solid and hung on to the job everybody called him whatever came to their minds.

If Benny, Bud, Bob or anyone else has any complaints to make they ought to examine their consciences. As I've said before, I'm glad I got out of Paris when I did. I'd be happier in the field I

guess (not that I'm not satisfied here) but then again I'd be indirectly responsible to Paris and I'd rather not.

Those 38 fellows who went to the replacement depot were classed as non-essential to the *Stars and Stripes*. Benny is safe, although why he wants to stay in Paris is a mystery. He has the idea that is still THE paper and that he will be close to anything that goes on inside the organization. Actually, the Liege edition has the biggest circulation of any, by far. Moreover, when the brass yells, they are so far away we can't hear them.

I'll bet that night with Joe and Warren staying over was a howl. As usual, Joe's letter brought a laugh with it. We hope to have him up here when he comes back although I don't know whether he'll want to come or if Paris will send him. I'll get a letter off to Warren tomorrow. I've been way behind on letters. Must be about 20 in my desk waiting to be answered. Never happened before, either.

If the bonds are still being addressed to Billee Gray, I guess the Army won't believe I'm married, sweetheart. When I made the change of address in Paris I also asked them to change the name. Well, as long as we're getting them, it's ok.

You thought I might be perturbed because you aren't like Jane. Where ever did you get a notion like that, my darling wife? I wouldn't change one tiny bit of you for all the Janes, Josies and Gypsies in the world. I don't even want you to pronounce the "d" in wouldn't, shouldn't and couldn't. Just like you wouldn't want me to have anything but big ears. And, for your information, pigeon, I have absolutely no trouble reading your writing. In fact, I go through it so fast the first time I have to read it at least three times. If you'd rather use the typewriter, okay. But, I'd prefer the way you have been writing.

I was so happy to hear you say Mom wouldn't ever sell 412. I know I'm being awfully selfish, but there's a lot of me and you connected with it. If you have a rival, angel, it's 412. I'm in love with it.

I hope you weren't puzzled by the cable I sent, asking you not to send any more clothes, angel. Last week I asked you to cut down on the packages and things because I've accumulated so darn much stuff I actually don't know where to keep it. When the time comes for me to move I'll have to dispose of a lot of it. Then, a letter came saying you were thinking of sending a coat like Andy's back with Joe. I got a cold sweat, picturing another coat or jacket. In the same breath that I said, "She's wonderful," I asked Benny by teletype to send a cable asking you not to send it.

I've only had the two packages and there doesn't seem any possibility of me getting the others in the near future so we'd better skip them. All I need now is your love... and keep sending me plenty of that.

The two big reasons I've been away from you this week has been the offensive launched by the First and Ninth Armies and the fact that I visited Eddie's grave.

A fellow I knew in JC (Ed McGovern) stopped in to see me the other day. He told me he thought he could find out where Ed was buried from First Army Graves and Registration. He called three hours later and gave me the information. So, the following day (Thursday) I went out to the First Army Press camp at Spa, met Andy and we drove to Henri Chapelle, in Belgium on the road to Aachen.

It's practically on the Belgian-German frontier. There is a huge American cemetery there, about 15,000 graves, and Eddie's was Grave 138, Row 7, Plot LL. It wasn't fixed as well as it will be in a month or so. But there it was with one of his dog tags on the white cross. The officer at the cemetery said the thaw had caused a lot of the graves to sink a little and they aren't going to plant grass or fix any of them until the ground is thoroughly thawed out.

Later we drove through Aachen (my first trip inside Germany). Hon, it was the worst blitz I've ever seen and that covers a lot of territory. Aachen was a fairly large city, but I doubt if there was a building or house with a roof or inside left to it. Picture, if you can, a city about the size of half of Cleveland just laid to ruins and you get an idea of Aachen.

I stayed overnight at the Press camp, met George Hicks (just back from the States) and others I hadn't seen in a long time. Also saw "Hollywood

Canteen," I think it was... lousiest film I've seen in years. I had an opportunity to sit in on the briefing for the big offensive, then went to bed while Andy took off for the front at 11 p.m. We were jammed trying to get all the coverage on the offensive but we did a good job. Ralph Martin (now up in our territory with the 9th Army) came in with a good piece, Andy did a good one from First, fellows named Leiser and Lee came through with good yarns and Larry Riordan, our photographer, enabled us to turn out a full page of pictures on it.

While I think of it, hon, will you give the location of Ed's grave to John? I'll probably lose it after awhile. The town is Henri Chapelle.

We have a "farewell" here tonight. Bill Spear is leaving for Paris, from where he'll take off by boat for the New York office. It was good working with him. Look him up when he gets settled in NY, sweetheart. You'll like him. I turned down the top desk job in Bill's place. Maybe I'm selfish, but there aren't enough good copyreaders and headline writers here to turn out the kind of paper I'd want to have and rather than be the top man on it, I said I'd rather continue to do what I am doing. Larsen and another guy named Art Force are taking over in Bill's place, and I'm afraid to think



Above is a picture of how the cemetery at Henri Chapelle looked when it was first set up, with temporary grave makers. Below is how the cemetery looks today.

what's going to happen to the paper, for awhile anyway. I'll help them as best I can but it won't be enough. Bill leaves a big gap on the desk. I'll be able to give you a better report in about a week.

And now, little girl, you just take yourself inside for your shower... you can wear my 'jamas, and get ready to be tucked in. If you ask me in a very special way you may come over to my house, but only for a little while, mind you. Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

February 24, 1945—New York

Darling,

It just isn't possible. Actually it's Saturday and no one is here but Jane and I. Just doesn't add up. Might I add this is the second night in as many weeks that we're alone. To make everything perfect, two long letters from you yesterday and one today. I still have back mail to receive so that will be something to look forward to, too. These letters were from the 9th, 10th, 14th of February... the best timing in some time.

I haven't had a date in two nights with you. Thursday, Rita and Earl had dinner for us all... Jane, Marg, Joe and I. It was quite an evening. I hope Rita wasn't too perturbed at our arguing. Some of the wildest ideas I've ever heard. I love to listen to Joe and his isolationist thoughts. He comes out with the unexpected always. Rita, Earl and Marg are definitely pro-New Dealers while Jane and I are on the fence to a certain extent and really interesting, but sometimes I get a bit frightened at the way they talk and need to straighten me out.

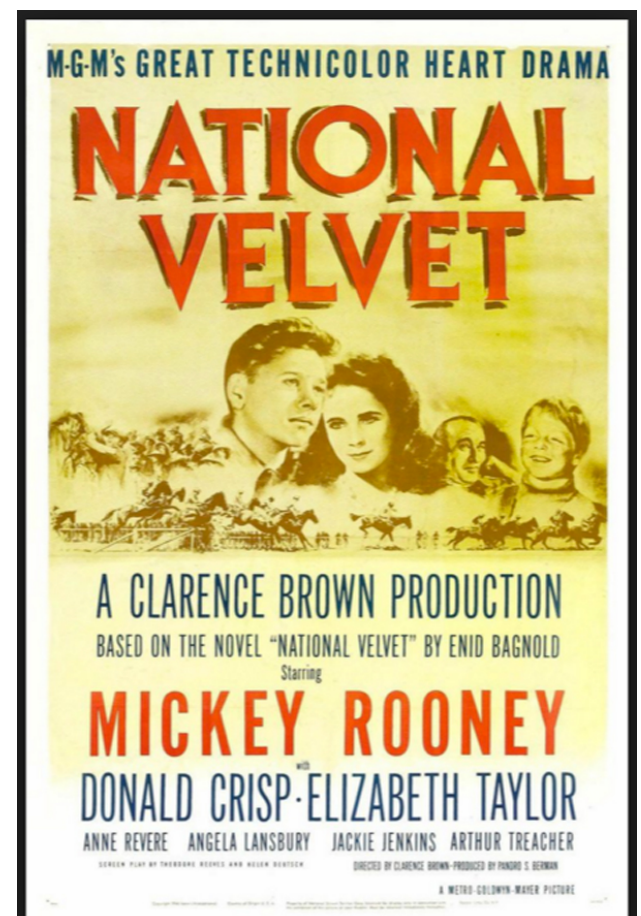
Yesterday, Earl checked Morrow in at the Fort Jay hospital in the psycho ward. I wouldn't be surprised if he's released. Libby called to see if a room had been obtained for him so she could move back in her apartment.

Last night, Marg was here for supper and we all went to the movies after. Say a good movie... "National Velvet." Mickey Rooney, but really good.

I talked to Father John yesterday about 50 cents worth. I haven't seen him since New Years Day. He wrote to Sherman Productions but hasn't received an answer yet. Earl, Rita, Jane and I are all going over to 195 in the afternoon. Father John will come over in the evening. We'll have dinner here.

Your letters are super. I could just love you to death. This baseball lingo you're using is the best yet. Jane thinks I'm crazy because I sit here a giggle and won't tell her why.

Remember my telling you about the secretarial position I heard about? I went for an interview last night and I suspected it was the former Birth Control League only under a new



name. The doctor was very nice. Terribly wrapped up in her cause and telling me about the job, etc. Then I told her it was against my principles and faith. She was much more tolerant than anyone else I've heard discuss the issue. She then proceeded to brief me on the hearth (?) angle. She isn't exactly the official scorer but anyhow, I learned a few things I didn't know before that I'll brief you on in person. Thought you'd find out, now didn't you? After I sent the cable about the twins I realized it should have said "home run" instead of "homecoming."

Received several Liege editions and they look swell. Didn't see your name once. Father John received some 19 and I think your name appears once. We just can't be satisfied, can we?

Earl mentioned something about an idea for a book you both had... would like to hear more.

They were very fortunate in subletting a large three room apartment on 228th St. through the officers club... pays to be an officer. They only pay \$85.00 a month, too.

Your watch is in the repair shop. I'll have it in a week or ten days in time, I hope, to send it over with Hod or Graff... preferably the former. I think I mentioned Earl forgot to give it to me before he went on leave.

Jane received a letter from Benny telling her all about the blow up. She's been terribly upset about it. I've tried to calm her down but she's like Benny. I can see where he is painting the picture pretty black... mentioned being sent to the infantry. I'm glad you are out of it... awfully glad.

The check was really a surprise. Father John was asking me about that yesterday and thought some remuneration should be upcoming. Since our cash situation isn't exactly good, I'll put it in the bank.

I've been using the typewriter all evening... got some letters that haven't been answered in some time out of the way. I was just too tired to type yours... besides I like writing letters. Jane has taken over and is typing Benny a book.

It's amazing how well we all get along. You should see Jane, Marg, Joe and me tooting around together. It's a relief to know Morrow is in the hospital. I expected any hour to be informed a cab had run him down, etc.... pleasant thought. He was really in bad shape. I hope they'll be able to do something for him.

I wish I could put into words how much it means that you are you. You know I'm more than a bit proud of you, Mr. K. Do you mind? I've been discouraged this week. Seems like it'll be such a long time again but your letter sort of picked me up and dusted me off. It's three months tonight since you left. Three months yesterday since I saw you last. Seems more like three years... then again, like three weeks. To say I've missed you is such an understatement. I'm just not me without you.

I've been thinking about the cabin deal. I don't think we could get a livable one under a thousand.. these times. Suppose I keep looking for a quiet place to spend the month you'll have. I've been thinking about another idea...

By the time we could build we'd probably have a car so perhaps it would be practical... at any rate it's only an idea. How would you like a rambling six room house with rather large rooms and a couple of acres around it? Haven't investigated the cost but will. An Oak Lodge on a smaller scale... a place

for a dog, a garden and lots of children. If we wanted to have a barbecue and have North Arlington there we could. As soon as the weather is nicer I'm going to ride out to Darlington... might be we could find a place already built. I'd kind of like to do our own, though. Do you know of any place that wouldn't be too far out to commute to and from? It's only an idea... kind of fun to play around with them. Together we'll hit on the right dream and make it materialize.

I hope I never get any older inside, darling. I want to be young enough to remember how I was when I was very young so I'll be able to understand our children... their dreams and fancies. With all we've done, ours will probably be the prize dreamers. You know what I'm talking about, don't you? I don't want to be a parent. I want them to be able to know we'll understand them

Gee, hon, I've rattled on at a great rate tonight. Do you mind? You'd better not. Do you think you could stick around long enough while I shower, etc., before you tuck me in?

Darling, I love you so much. I miss you so darn much. Keep well, darling and I'll be back tomorrow. Goodnight, my dearest.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your sweetheart

February 26, 1945—New York

Darling,

It just didn't happen to me... not Mrs. Kiley. I know it must be someone else. Do you know that actually seven letters came today from the man of our house? I'm right up on a cloud. I've read and reread them... parts to Jane and the other parts to me again. This morning there were five in our box and that was almost too much, especially for a rainy Monday morning and then this evening when I arrived home two more were waiting. The dates are Jan 13, 24, 25, 28, 30, 31 and Feb. 17. You received eight from me in one day so now we're nearly even. Anyway we'll call it square. Those early ones must have passed that canoe that mine went over in. I can hardly sit here and rattle this off I'm so much up in the air. Haven't been able to do much all day. Seven letters... that just doesn't happen to everyone.

I called Father John and asked him what he wrote to Sherman. He decided we'd better let the Slesinger guy hang on to it. He's the guy that knows the ropes in this business and really, hon, you shouldn't worry about it. It's a case of either it is sold or it isn't. We'll just have to take a gamble on it. There's a good chance we can make more than the two hundred so we may as well hold out a little longer. The thing that makes me wonder is that they offered Slesinger fifty to begin with and then you two hundred. In the interim, someone must have gotten interested, otherwise it just doesn't make sense. They are likely as not to turn right around and sell it for a lot more and make a neat little profit off it. You shouldn't get upset about it. There just isn't any reason for it. So if it fizzles out and we lose the two hundred, it's just one of those things we chalk up to experience. Father John is of the opinion that we should hold out on it.

Mrs. K tried to do a little shopping. If my wardrobe was depleted before, hon, it's shameful now what I don't have. I came home empty-handed and very discouraged. Everything is out of range,

darling... just doesn't come anywhere near fitting our income. I'm not giving up entirely. I'll go back and look some more. I did find a pair of neat-looking shoes... low cut pump with a spectator heel in black kid. I'll have to wear these. The suede pumps I bought are resting in their box awaiting your homecoming. They are such nice ones and they fit our champagne tastes.

I was afraid you might miss the other Valentines this year. Since you're a married man now perhaps they aren't sending them to you so I thought I'd make up for them and besides, I wanted to tease you a bit. I should have signed them all different and used anonymous addresses just for fun, but I guess I couldn't go that far. I thought some of them were kind of cute.

Jane and I were trying summer hairdos. I found one but Jane has almost too much hair. We're going to have to do something with hers. Do you think you'd like me in an upswept job? Doesn't look too bad and will be cool.

I think Warren will be all right... just family troubles I've learned since. Warren doesn't have too much patience or understanding and doesn't have the ability to see ahead, so he got a little involved and since it is family trouble it will straighten out, so we won't worry about it now. You will probably be hearing from him soon at any rate, and his address is Sect. C, Amarillo, Texas. He's been made a permanent party there.

Yesterday, we went to see Kay Konselman. Had dinner and then a movie in the evening. She's very nice... the first time I've been around her since I met her the first time with you. Remember she got a little stiff that night. She and Jane were exchanging notes on the Paris office. Carl is living with Benny now as you probably know. I'm afraid Benny misses the old gang pretty much now that he's alone. It's a shame. He certainly isn't painting a pretty picture to Jane... couldn't anything be that bad but an S&S snafu, I guess.

Morrow was released from the hospital today. I sure hope they know what they are doing.. so anything can happen now. I wish he straightens up and acts like a man for a change.

We saw a good movie, "The Thin Man Goes Home." Usual cast but it's light and diverting. I enjoyed it.

The little WAC has the same APO as you so she must be in Paris. I'm only teasing you, darling. Of course, I am a bit jealous. I ought to be in the WACs and be stationed in Paris. I'm afraid the roads would be burning up with that jeep between Liege and Paris. That would be fun, wouldn't it? Besides, I'm getting spring fever.

I'm glad you are so busy all the time. I don't mind your thinking about the work when you're writing to me. That sort of makes me a part of it, and I like that. I was so afraid that you wouldn't be busy enough inside and you would want to go back to the field, for which I couldn't blame you in the least. Remember, hon, I want you to be as happy as you can while you're away and that



means doing something that you enjoy. By this time you can almost pick your spot, I think... and so remember, I want it to be the best place for you where you will be happy. From your letters, you really seem to be enjoying the work in spite of the grind, and that makes me happy.

I just can't enjoy things without you, hon, and I feel like we could put that money I'm spending to having fun with you when you come home, but I seem to get so involved all the time. I'm just ashamed, darling, of what I haven't been able to do about saving money.

Jane and I were just talking about how we used to tear around to a move at night when I know we were all tired, but it was fun and I'm so glad that we did so many things and went to so many places because neither of you are having time for any gadding now. I'm afraid your respective wives are taking care of it for both of you.

I was terribly interested in the plans for the paper. My ears get big when I hear the slightest mention of what is going to take place after. I thought that probably Bud's prospective Pacific trek wasn't just to report.

Now don't be worrying about buying me anything. It's too expensive. I'm going to give Bette the Chanel for her birthday. I thought she'd like to have it once she's turning into such a little glamour gal. If you can believe it, she has lost more weight. We're going to surprise her with a party. I'll get her something from me and bake a cake, and the perfume will be from you, ok?

Jane has just hit the "crib" so you know what that means. She just made a dive for the French book so maybe I can stay a bit longer.

You would laugh at us tonight. We gave up all deserts for Lent so that means no more chocolate doughnuts, cakes or pies, etc. We are really sticking, too. Tonight, I guess we both wanted something. We killed a bottle of ginger ale. Then I made some lemonade and to give it a little lift I put a cherry in each glass and added a little of the syrup to make pink lemonade. We've both been very silly all night. She heard from Benny, too, so together with that and my seven letters we can afford to be a little slap happy tonight.

I'm sorry about Bud, hon. Perhaps I shouldn't have told you or at least saved it 'til you came home. I was a bit annoyed with it, too. Knowing you as well as he does he should have known better. Benny sort of sat him down on it. Benny will undoubtedly be mad to know that Jane told me. Just one of those things, I guess.

Working six days, hon, I don't have an opportunity to be in Jersey at the right time to see Ray. I dropped him a note the other night to let him know I hadn't completely disappeared. I don't know when I'd get over there, because I'll be working those hours for some time yet. I only took a couple of hours off this afternoon to go shopping.

Golly, hon, I never doubted that you weren't writing to me. I was just mad at whoever was holding them up, and definitely there was a snafu somewhere.

I can assure you, darling, that the bouquet I delivered to Berta would have passed your approval. It was a gorgeous spring bouquet, very large and just as beautiful as roses but not quite as expensive.

I'm really looking forward to the date we have upcoming in the bathroom that I might witness you shaving. That's something to look forward to, and I don't care how many funny faces you make. I'll love every one of them.

You see, darling, when I started on our chronological history of beds the one in Flushing was the first one that I remembered but, too, at the same time we didn't sleep in that one so I was right after all and you got all upset for nothing. You don't think for one second that I could forget Thanksgiving Day 1944. My first one as Mrs. K. and the only one I ever spent with you.

You are forgiven for misjudging me, however. I love you just the same. I just happened to think of that one night while I was trying to talk to you... didn't expect to upset you, however. (I know you were fooling me.)

Jane has lost interest in the French, so I guess I will have to say goodnight. Do you mind the typing? I knew it was going to be a good long one and I'd never get it all in one envelope written... so you'll excuse me this time. You're probably very grateful because this is one you will be able to read.

Tuck me in nice, darling. I still haven't received the letter explaining the three kisses. You must have put it in a bottle and dropped it in the river hoping it would find its way to the sea. Be back very soon... tomorrow after I return from 195.

I love you very, very much. Not just because I got seven letters but just because you're Mr. K. Goodnight, my darling. Here's a super gloppy kiss just because you're so wonderful.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

February 26, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

I think this is a good night to me to tell you why I kiss you three times before saying, "Goodnight, sweetheart." You have asked me several times since I mentioned it. There was a great temptation to tease you by not revealing my reason until... well, until we were in each other's arms again.

But, tonight, we are here in the office all alone... just the two of us. And, I'd like to tell you the story of "The Three Kisses."

You shouldn't think I plan things like this, darling, or that I do them for reasons other than impulse.

The three kisses represent, or are symbolic of those moments... unforgettable moments.

The first... our night on the patio of Grove Park Inn.

The second... our kiss on the altar steps when we were married.

The third... our kiss when our first child is born.

You are likely to think, "he couldn't have had that in his mind all the time."

No, I didn't, sweetheart. The first time I kissed you three times I didn't know why I did it, but I was aware of what I had done. The thought occurred that I should have a reason for doing it, and so I dedicated those kisses to the aforementioned moments.

You may wonder why, of all the times we kissed did he select the first two?

Well, the second is obvious, angel. I couldn't ever forget me asking John if it was all right to kiss you, and the way your lips trembled when they touched mine Or perhaps, it was mine trembling. I don't remember exactly, do you?

I hesitated a little, though not very long, before choosing the first. I thought perhaps it should be symbolic of our very first kiss. But no. I figured there really was more attached to those pulsating moments at the Inn.

Without being able to fully describe, I know what those moments at the Inn meant to me.

I loved you then as much as I ever could, sweetheart. And, by "as much," I mean to the fullest and for eternity. Your words, "It isn't fair," will ever be in my heart. There was more feeling in those words than I'll ever be able to express.

The third reason, I'm sure will be one of our really unforgettable moments, darling.

And, so, now I'll kiss you those three times and put you to bed.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

February 28 1945—New York

Darling,

Just a wee letter, hon. This has been a busy night... general cleaning, ironing, shampoo and shower and in between I made spaghetti sauce for tomorrow night. Charly Notley and Marg are due in for dinner.

You'll laugh, but the sauce smelled so good we had to have just a little bit... not enough to make us gain anymore weight.

It's raining pitchforks out but Mrs. K. doesn't mind because she bought a raincoat yesterday... real snazzy. Jane and I bought them alike... strictly military, exactly like yours. Honest, hon, it's smart looking. Of course, I don't set if off the way Jane does with her height but I guess I'll get by.

Last night I went to see Father Al's show at St. Johns. Really good, too. He asked to be remembered to you. How very thin he is... looks as if a mild wind would carry him away.

El received a letter from Johnnie Ryan... didn't give out too much information except that Eddie went down fighting and that he didn't suffer. He and Eddie were very close and of course, it was a shock to him. Pop is fine, though. He looked good last night when I was there.

El hasn't heard from Tom in nearly a month now, so you know how she feels. The weather must be holding it all up, especially there.

Benny had a letter from Jane in five days and she received his in six... pretty good, isn't it? It's the one about the broadcast. You probably know about that now.

I was going to make this short. I'll be back tomorrow with a longer one. Wouldn't mind another letter this week but after seven on Monday, I shouldn't complain.

I'm not very glamorous tonight with my hair all pinned up. Do you mind tucking me in this way? I love you so, so much. Of course, I don't miss you at all.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

March 2, 1945—New York

My darling,

Received a letter tonight, a little old but awfully welcome, written February 8. What do they do with them?

Of course, by this time the blowup is over and as nearly as we can figure, all is fairly quiet with rumors of Goodfriend coming home.

Yesterday's newest developments leave me in a quandary. Why are they extending all these guys' orders, some of them three months longer? I don't get it. All we can do is watch and wait, but I do feel a little as if I'm sitting on dynamite and anything can happen. One thing I'm glad of... you and Benny were first over and sort of served your time. Perhaps you'll have a better chance of getting out. I can't wait to see what happens... feel like I want to hurry everything for the next few months.

Marg was here for dinner and she gave us all the latest developments. Joe took himself to the hospital on his own (had an awful cold)... got better, then they wouldn't release him. He cussed everyone out there and finally Major House from the A.N.S. came to his rescue and he's due out today or tomorrow.

The latest on Morrow is that after about a week in the hospital he was released. He's back to work for A.N.S.... sober and courting Libby!!! It's a great life but I give up.

Lt. Oulihan who is supposed to be a friend of Goodfriend's... writes to him... claims that when the European phase is over the Paris edition will become 16 pages and the other editions will be eliminated. He didn't have much to say about the staff.

By this time you will have the message concerning Slesinger's decision to buy the story himself for \$200. Marg believes very much that if he puts it to a lucrative use that he will give us a cut on it... that he's that kind of guy.

It seems that the MGM deal for the fellows to do the *Stars and Stripes* movie is going through. If it does, Bud and Andy will be returned to the states to write the script... nice work.

There's a heck of a lot of goldbricking going on at the *Stars and Stripes*. I guess you can tell from the service you've been getting. I've had a few of your "beautiful" messages read to me. Some seem to believe they are on extended furloughs. Marg is wondering what will happen when the others arrive. It will be interesting to see. Bucknell seems to be old faithful on the job if you can believe that... sometimes working two days without rest, etc.

How I seem to be passing all the gossip on to you. Hope you don't mind. I asked Joe to send you Dan Parker's column and Bob Considine... suggested others... thought you would get them a little quicker that way. I don't know whether they are doing it or not. I'm continuing to send those I think will interest you as well as Pegler's column.

I've gotten so I don't wait around in meat markets anymore, but with Earl and Rita coming for dinner Sunday, something had to be done. You'd die if you could see the price of meat I bought. I had something like chicken in mind but no go, so I ended up with a pot roast. I only asked for four pounds, darling, but it looks just enormous. It's bothering me now what we'll cook it in.

Jane is busy trying to make a new hat out of an old one... seems to be progressing very well. We haven't spoken two words all night. We got all engrossed in "Life" (two copies) and the evening papers. It's a nice companionable quiet. We don't have to talk. My laundry is soaking and it keeps getting later and I know I have to go out there and wash.

Jane and I have had a brilliant idea for this summer... close the apartment or sub-sub-let it to some of the *Stars and Stripes* and get jobs at a summer resort. We haven't made up our minds on the mountains or the seashore. Sounds kind of crazy but the thought of the summer here sort of scares me. Of course, maybe by that time you'd be home... no, that's being too optimistic. I won't think along those lines.

The story of the clipping is priceless, darling. Imagine us floating around Hoertgen. That's really something.

I'm greatly enlightened on Turkish baths. How I hope the situation is relieved and you don't have to go around borrowing bathrooms, and no more cold, cold showers. I've done that a couple of times here when the hot water would run out. Brrrrr. Get that cold just thinking about it. I haven't forgotten the one you gave me the night we washed each other's backs. I could have cheerfully wrung your neck that night, Mr. K.

Now it's cleared up that you weren't drunk... I was a bit dubious of that statement, Mr. K., knowing you pretty well by now and your capacity. The only time I ever saw you, let's say fuzzy, was the night of the cellar party at Dot's and the night I had to be "tucked" in. You sang Irish ballads to me. That was wonderful, except I didn't like getting sick.

The laundry is calling, hon. I'll be back tomorrow. You'll have to wait awhile to tuck me in but I'll be waiting for all three of my kisses, now I know who they are for. You're so nice, Mr. K. I couldn't help but be thoughtful and loving... beautiful I'm dubious of except just for you. I'm sure no one else would see it and I couldn't care less as long as you think I am. I love you so, so much.

You would probably laugh if you could see me but I am comfortable. I was practicing on the upswept coiffure a bit ago and haven't bothered to take it down. I have the old brown slacks on... your shirt hanging out, kitchen boy fashion. The legs of the slacks are above my knees. Right now I'm in the corner of the sofa using my knees for a desk... and guess what? No socks or shoes. Must look a little like an urchin but I am comfy, darling. Goodnight for now. I miss you so.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

March 3, 1945—New York

My dearest,

Another Saturday to cross off the calendar and a quiet one, too. Bob Morra was here for dinner and stayed 'til ten. Since then we've read all the Sunday papers, showered and pinned our hair up, and I'm ready to be tucked in. I have your pajamas on now, darling, and I'm in the same corner of the sofa.

I've missed you so this night, as usual. Saturday is truly the loneliest night in the world.

The quiet dinner with Rita and Earl has turned into a Stars and Stripes gathering. I haven't been able to figure out where we're going to put them all. Joe and Morrow are coming, too, making us six and you know what difficulties we have with that table. Incidentally, all want to go to 195, so I called El and warned her. Of course, we're all welcome but she only expected Earl and Rita.

Before I forget, the Evans, Dot and Jeanette, that sent the Christmas card are school friends of mine. She and I took instruction with Mother Mueller at the same time... not the same hours but our training covered the same time. I was received a week or two before her but she was there that day at St. Lawrence's. She waited 'til after her baby was born before she became a convert... both swell people.

Makes me so mad... there's something I've been trying to remember to tell you for days now. I think of it during the day but when the time comes to write it just leaves me... maddening.

Guess what I bought today? A Dutch oven. We didn't have a thing to cook that pot roast in so I decided it was a good investment... a nice one with a Pyrex cover.

I've decided to enlarge our dishes to a service for eight. I think it a good idea, don't you? Six isn't so practical.

We wore our raincoats for the first time today. Felt rather conspicuous in a new one. I'd like to have it get a little dirty. It's nice and warm, too. I was surprised. There was a touch of spring in the air. I hope the weather is considerably better there now for you.

I'm going to an early Mass in the morning for Communion. Jane will go to a later one. She's stuck on getting up in the morning.

Morrow looked so much better tonight than that day we took him to his apartment from the hospital... thank heavens.

El had sixteen letters from Tom in one day after three weeks of no mail, so she's happy again.

Jane has gone to bed and I'm still here on the sofa with the light on, so maybe I'd better let you tuck me in for the night... it is awfully late.

I've missed you so tonight... almost I can't write. That's not good, is it? I'd give so much to see you wrinkle your nose at me or rest your chin on your hand and give me that special look. You used to do it at the oddest times. I always wondered if you were conscious of doing it. I loved it because I never saw you look at anyone else like that. It seemed to be just for me, somehow.

So many little things I miss... washing the pancake turner we borrowed from 195 last night reminded me of the night you left it in the oven. You cooked supper that night. I remember the night you sort of scolded me when I didn't kiss you when I came in. I remember Father John was there and I think I was a little shy, Mr. K. I didn't really forget. I know I shouldn't have been, but I was.

I could go on and on. Love me always, darling, just as you do now. Goodnight now, my dearest. I love you so.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

March 3, 1945—Liege

Evening, sweetheart,

We are all alone again in the office tonight. It's 12:45 a.m. and everybody has gone home, leaving us to ourselves for our date night.

I can see you making funny faces at me, too, because I'm chewing away on a box of nuts.

Yes, they came in one of your packages today. In fact, there were three packages. That makes four in all that I have received.

Darling, I can't tell you how happy those packages made me. Oh, it wasn't the packages, so much as you. The best part of all packages, I guess, are the surprises and there were more than a few in these three.

The big surprise of all was the picture folder with my one and only sweetheart all over it. Of course, the one of me in the center takes up a little room, too. I was so fond of it... don't believe I missed showing it to anyone here. I didn't know whether to put it on my desk or in my hotel room; finally decided too many people were going to ask me who that "great big beautiful doll" was and put it on the stand next to my bed.

Everything in the packages was just swell, hon. I sent one of the small boxes to Benny, the one with his name on it, and also the pate de foie gras. He actually phoned me from Paris to comment on it.

By the time this reaches you it may be time to send another box. I think one a month will be plenty.

In the next package, I'd like some toothpaste, toothbrushes (3), razor blades, and Colgate's shaving cream.

Tell Jane I'm sending her a personal letter of thanks for the hand cream. Gosh, it feels good on my hands when I go to bed at night.

With all of that, I got a letter, too, dated Feb. 19. Benny, Andy and Bob knew about Morrow and Libby, but your letter broke the news to me. All I can say is that it is too bad, yet it is private business from my viewpoint. I know Morrow is a pretty difficult guy to understand with his drinking, and chances are that is what came between them.

Andy came in for a while tonight. We talked awhile and he went back to the press camp in order to get an early start up front tomorrow. He intends to get into Cologne with the advance troops. Bud has been around here a bit, but mostly up front. Ralph Martin stopped in yesterday on his way back to Paris to possibly take advantage of an offer to transfer to "Yank." He says he is unable to turn out good news stories anymore and would like to write the long features for Yank. The recent wave of politics around Paris Stars and Stripes has nothing to do with it.

When Benny called me, he devoted about 15 minutes to explanation of a potential new setup in Paris with a Lt. Col. just over from Washington, taking over Goodfriend's job and shaking up the organization. He wanted to know if I would consider coming to Paris as "war editor" for all editions. I know how Benny jumps at conclusions, so string along with him. I'm sure he's wrong, so I'm continuing being happy here and working hard.

Carl is on the desk, knows little or nothing about making up pages, so I'm now making up six instead of four as I did when Bill Spear was here. As soon as I can get someone here to handle sports, I'll work in with Larsen and run the "war" end of the paper.

We were here until 4:30 yesterday morning conferring on our problems with Elmer Roessner, the civilian consultant to *Stars and Stripes*. There aren't many problems but we need two more men, better ink for the presses, etc.

I got a message from Benny today, on the Molotoff deal. I told him to let Slesinger have it for the \$200, with the hope I'll get cut in if he does anything with it.

A box of stationery came yesterday from Eleanor Scott, together with a couple of letters from Earl. Almost forgot... I received your note in the envelope from New York. By now you know I've been to the cemetery.

I'll have more to say tomorrow, darling.

Benny just this minute called from Paris to tell me he's writing Jane. Somehow it reminded me there was a bottle of champagne under my desk. One of the boys brought it from the front.. so I opened it and poured two glasses. Just by way of having one for you.

I'm missing you so much, sweetheart. But, I want it that way. I even try to miss you more by filling my lungs with your "L'Heure Intime" from your hanky each night.

So, good night, my darling. Be a good girl... no, I'm not misbehaving.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

PS: This is a request for a package.

March 5, 1945—New York

My darling,

So much to tell you tonight that I hardly know where to begin.



On the Jersey City ferry. Above: Earl Mazo, Joe Fleming, Morrow Davis; below: Rita Mazo, Jane Price, Billee.

March 1945.



First of all I think you're the nicest husband a girl could have. Two long wonderful letters written Feb. 15 and 24 arrived today... nice newsy ones. I'll return to those later.

It was too late last night to write about the day so I'll brief you on that now.

Jane and I were up fairly early yesterday and attended 10 o'clock Mass... gave the apartment a good cleaning. We had to move the table in the living room and set up the card table. We moved the window seat into the dining nook and set the tables in front of the window. Joe arrived just in time not to help us. We missed you guys to help us arrange. Morrow followed Joe in a short time, very sober and quiet. Rita and Earl came about an hour later. It was a good day. Things went along pretty smoothly. The pot roast was a success... my very first. I had to use lemon pie mix because we didn't have sugar enough and the pie didn't turn out very good... looked like a bride's pie, but everyone ate it. Morrow enjoyed the dinner immensely. He ate as if he were half-starved. I was so glad he could come. I feel as if he and Joe need looking after.

We left about five-thirty to go to 195. Earl decided he wanted to take the ferry over so we did. It only took us an hour and a half to get there. Pop laughed when we told him how we came. Funny... we asked a cop at Liberty Street about the ferry. I wasn't sure and he tried to persuade us not to go to Jersey City.

The evening was a success, too. Father John came over about seven-thirty and of course, we discussed everything. Pop rendered a few of your choicest bits of boyhood devilry. Joe loved the story about your trying to stop a motorcycle.

Don't blush, darling... it's all right. Sister Gertrude Jose told me the choicest one. I'll tell you about it sometime.

Earl as well as some of the others all asked the same question... if I find you hard to live with. Seems you led them a hard life with your neatness and cleanliness. They wanted to know if I was as neat as you and, of course, I had to say no. They told about having to isolate Andy, he was so much to the extreme.

Joe stayed with us last night. Here's one for the books... We had left the dishes and Joe helped us. He dried them... can you imagine that?

Earl and Joe were much interested in the Liege editions I have... decided it was pretty good.

In a letter from Benny, he reports Bob sending great stuff from the 12th Army front. They're using it as feature stuff.

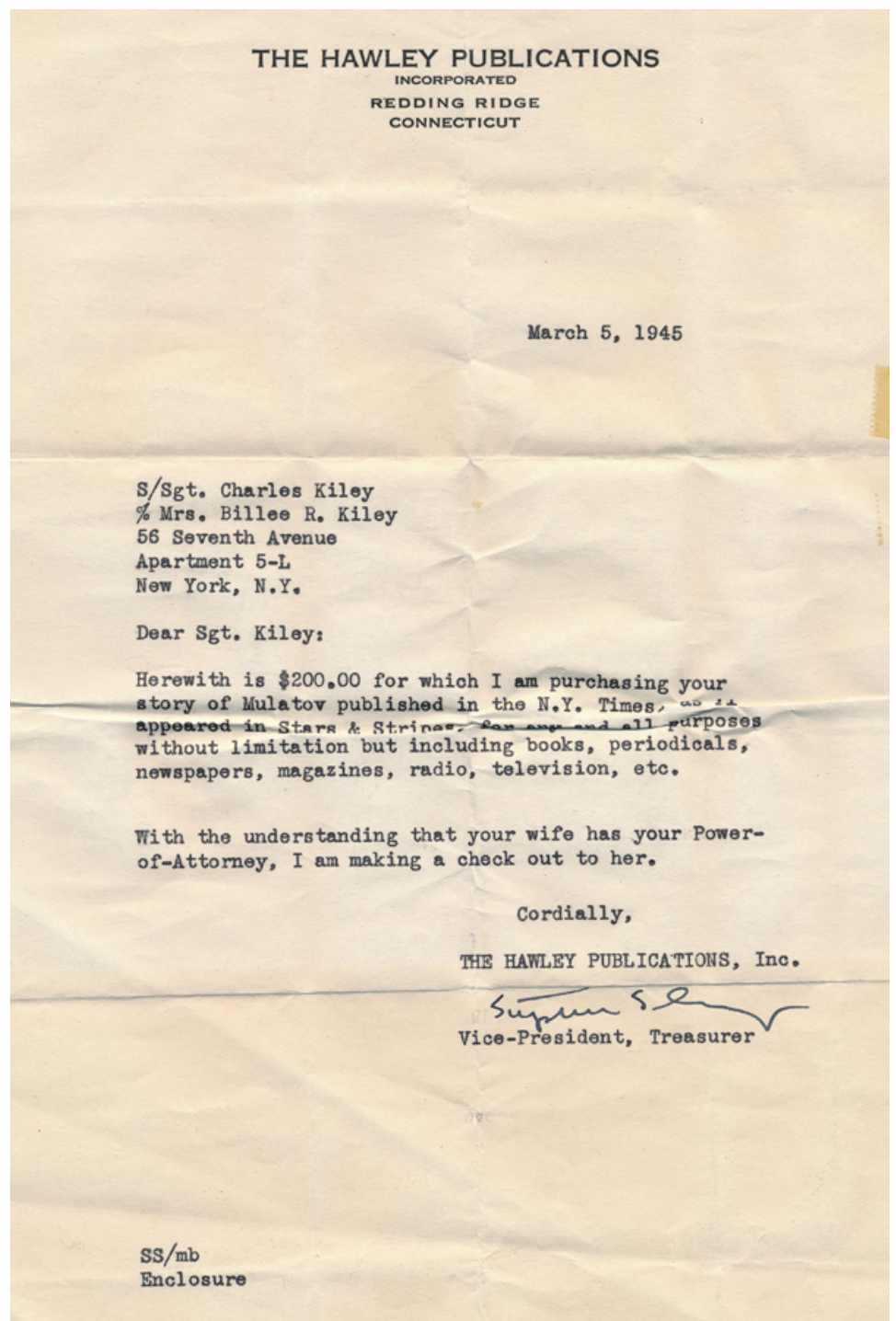
After hearing Earl talk about the difficulty on the paper being mostly the guys' fault, I began to wonder. I feel that Earl is pretty fair-minded and looks at things from all angles. Of course, Jane decided immediately he wasn't on our team.

Knowing Bud, Bob and Benny, I can see where there would be trouble. He's given Jane the impression he's carrying the whole fight on his shoulders. I could crown him for having worried Jane so. He's calmed down considerably in these latest letters.

I'm glad you got straightened out with Bud and Andy. That upset me being the bearer of the news. I didn't want to cause any trouble.

I believe I forgot to mention we took pictures on the ferry ride. Earl has a Stars and Stripes camera... a German Rolleiflex. I wish you could get one of those. They are wonderful cameras... very much like the one Freddie had that we used, and they do take swell pictures.

I go tomorrow to pick up the check at Slesinger's. I hope this is the right thing we're doing. He said over the phone tonight that you were to give him first option on anything else you did. I sure wish he wouldn't cuss so. I'm glad I'm dealing with him and not Father John.



Pop feels so much more at ease now that he's heard from Johnnie Ryan. I don't believe... in fact he said he couldn't believe it 'til he read the Ryan boy's letter. Now he know it's so. I didn't tell him about your visiting the cemetery. I think Father John should. I'll call him tomorrow and deliver the message to him.

I'm glad Andy went with you... very glad. Please remember me to him. He's a pretty hard guy to know. The more I saw of him the better I liked him. Incidentally, I still get the impression you think I sent the vest. It's a gift from Andy... swell of him, wasn't it?

It must have felt good to be visiting the press camp and seeing all the old friends. You haven't said too much but I feel you are missing the field work.

Now for my bit of news after so long.. I have a new job and it isn't baking cakes. I answered an ad today at Hattie Carnegie, Inc. You know the name I'm sure and what it stands for. I had one of the most sensible interviews for a position I ever had. He asked me what I could do and how much I wanted. He told me the nature of the work and weighed my qualifications against the requirements... decided I'd do and I start Friday at \$35.00 a week, 5 days a week, with Saturday mornings twice a month.

My old department store work qualified me for this deal. It's the wholesale offices where they make up the creations and send them out to the various stores, etc. I think it will be interesting.. at least a lot better than cutting stencils. I've had enough of that.

I've written reams. I would have used the typewriter but Jane's been asleep for a long while.

Darling, I think I missed you more yesterday... seems as if you had to be there yesterday and at 195 it came over me all of a sudden how much I wanted you there, where I could look across the room and see you. Seems all wrong somehow. I know I shouldn't be bitter but this is one of those nights when I'd like to throw things.

I'm weary, darling. I'd love to have you here to snuggle up against and go to sleep. I like the way I fit into the curve of your arm. What a good feeling it was to fall asleep holding your hand. You know, Mr. K., I love you very much, so much. Tuck me in. Goodnight, my dearest.

All my love and kisses, your sweetheart

March 7, 1945—Liege

Hello Kitten,

Everything happening at once, but when it happens this way I don't mind it a bit.

The First Army took Cologne yesterday, the Third Army rushed 60 miles to the Rhine today and the Russians started a new drive to Berlin.

Days like this mean a lot of work, late hours, etc. But I'm not minding it. I thrive on work, as you must know by now.

Got a letter from my sweetheart today, by way of brightening up a busy, rainy day. Once again, I'm waiting until the day's work is done before I read your letters. If I open them during the day I have so many things to distract me that I can't fully appreciate them. So, I just wait until I'm through, sit you on my lap and then listen to you talk.

Today's letter was the one of Feb. 21, in which you sounded awfully disgusted with Morrow, and I don't blame you. I went as far as I could with him over here, then gave up. I believe in being a missionary up to the point where nobody listens, then I quit... cold.

Please, angel, don't let him or anyone else upset you. If they do I'll be terribly annoyed if you don't politely tell them they aren't welcome.

I've had three letters from Earl but I honestly can't find five minutes to write to him. Joe, either. Too, I'm still trying to write the thank you letter to Jane.

Another batch of columns came yesterday and I liked them a lot. Thanks, funny-nose.

I'd like to correct one wrong impression you have, Mrs. K. And that is your belief that I'm not "jealous anymore."

Don't you believe it. If I live to be 1,000 I'll always be jealous of anyone or anything which takes five minutes of your time.

Because I didn't raise the roof when you dined with Freddie is no sign I'm an "old married man." I may have thought a lot, beautiful, without saying it.

I got off a letter to Lee and Harry after receiving another from them, this one from Lakeland. Say, that funeral home is a snappy address, isn't it?

You know, I can keep track of the mail Andy gets because it comes here from Paris to be passed on to him. Most always, when I open the envelopes from the New York office, there is a letter from Marg to Andy.

He's been in Cologne since it was under siege and has come through with some good stories. We have five men in that area now.

Forgive me, precious, if this is short tonight. I'll try and be with you again tomorrow.

Goodnight, angel.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

March 7, 1945—New York

Darling,

I'd like just curling up with my head snuggled against you and being Mrs. K. for a little while... your very latest letter written Feb. 26 arrived yesterday.

I'm glad you didn't tease me and keep me guessing. Your reasons are much too beautiful to just keep to yourself. They belong with us.

I was much more impressed with our moment at the Inn than our first kiss in Evelyn's car. The moment at the inn was the beginning of everything for me. I wanted so much for our life to begin together then, hence, "It isn't fair." It wasn't fair to have found something that we had and have to let it go at least for a time. I was very young and impatient. I knew somehow I'd wait forever, though. We seemed so alone with everything before us. It was cold and we were warmed only by each other. I know we were both shaking, perhaps from the cold. It seems such a long, long time ago.

I remember how breathless you were asking Father John's permission for our kiss. I was accused of hanging on later I believe. Couldn't care less, though. It was a wonderful day, wasn't it? Everything we ever dreamed of, and all the people about us who meant anything at all.

The third kiss is the one we still have before us. That will be a wondrous day and it seems now as if you will share it since we pitched a no hit, no run, no error game... or was it a shutout. Do you mind, darling, if I pause just long enough to say I love you very much? I love the wonderful way you think... your goodness, darling and all the wonderful things about you. I love the respect the fellows coming back have for you. Makes me glow with pride to have you so well thought of.

Do you mind, darling? I had to cry over that letter a little. Happy tears, though. I'm so happy you're the way you are. Wouldn't change you for anything.

Yesterday was a hectic day. Paid Slesinger a visit and picked up the check for \$200. I wish you were here to deal with him. He's a little too much for me to cope with. He talks in circles. I can hear you tagging him as a smart operator. Underneath his bluffing he probably knows what he's about. I wish I knew. I don't know whether this is news or not. I was dumbfounded but I'm not permitting myself to get excited... much too wonderful to happen but your name is the third along with Bud and Andy to write the story for MGM on *Stars and Stripes*. They are waiting for the final OK. I'm so mixed up about it and I think Steve is, too. He just doesn't make sense. So I'm trying to keep calm and keep my head. He asked me all sorts of questions about how you got along with Bud and Andy, etc. I gather from Marg tonight that Bud and Andy have known it for some time but haven't told us because it was all so indefinite. It still looks terribly indefinite to me, too. Right now, I feel as if I'm on a keg of dynamite. Who knows, darling, perhaps we will be Hollywood-bound. So much for that for now... makes nice dreams, doesn't it?

I went to 195 last night for Bette's birthday. Marge Lynch came down and Father John came in. She was surprised



Bette. Jersey City 1945

and delighted with her gifts. The Chanel was the highlight of the evening. I knew you would have given it to her, so it was all right. I can't think of a nicer time to get it than when you are 21. She cried over the cake, bless her. Then we all teased her. Incidentally, she has only 3 pounds to go before Father John has to fork over a new outfit.

Father John showed us the wedding pictures again and the Christmas pictures turned out swell. I saw you... it was sort of nice but I missed you a little more.

He brought me home... recalled the first time he brought me to New York. You were at Dix and I had spent the night and the day with your mom. It was a wet night just as last night was. That seems a long time ago, too.

He left me off in front of the door and waited until I went in. I thought he was gone when two drunken sailors wandered in right after me. I was waiting for the elevator. I looked again and there was Father John. They left then, and Father John followed in a few minutes after I was safely deposited in the elevator. See how nice I'm being taken care of?

I forgot to mention, Father John is very skeptical about Slesinger and his dealings. It's a good thing he hasn't been handling any of the details. I wonder what your reaction to a guy like him would be. It will be interesting to see what happens. I'm trying to be very calm about it and not get my hopes up, but when the prospect of being with you is involved, it's difficult.

I talked to Mom tonight. Haven't heard from her in a couple of weeks. She hasn't been well, and she's had to spend quite a bit of money for doctors. I'm sending her fifty dollars. I thought it would be all right with you. I really hope it isn't necessary often, but it seemed to be at this time. I gave her money before, you know, when I was home and in Matawan.

Earl told me what you did for Warren while he was in England, steering him right and looking after him as if he were a brother, and how you worried over him. The latter I knew, but I didn't know about you trying to get him assigned to the best group, etc. You know how Mom and I both feel about that.

I had a letter from my aunt, Aunt Kee. She's well again and was asking for you. My cousin is with the Ninth Army. Richard Esaias... we always called him Dick. You might happen to run into him. He's the son of one of Mom's brothers who died. Aunt Kee adopted Dick and his sister. We always were together when we were children. I haven't seen him in years. He's about three years older than I.

Lettie is still in Florida. Harry has a job at the airport there and his mother and father have joined them so she won't be as homesick.

Gee, hon, I've gone on at a great rate. I'm not too sleepy. I stayed home today. Almost afraid to tell you but I've another cold. Decided it would be better to stay inside. I slept hours and I think that helped more than anything. The weather has been so changeable lately. Darn. I usually have one cold a year but not two. I'll be all right, darling. By the time you get this I'll be in tip-top shape.

How is your cough, darling? Do you still get it? I hope you are taking good care of yourself. Be careful now the weather is changing how you dress and don't take off too many clothes at once. I know I should practice what I preach. I'll try to do better, really darling.

I must go and shower... grease my chest good with that awful smelling stuff... use those horrible nose drops and take Dr. Doyle's cough medicine and clunk into the crib. I don't think you'd like tucking me in so I'll excuse you. I'll get rid of it all quick so you can tuck me in. Darling, I miss you so. Love me so much, darling. Goodnight.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

March 10, 19445—Liege

Evening, sweetheart,

It's 1:45 a.m., and I was of a mind to go to bed, but I suddenly decided that if I can give the army 12 hours of my time each day I can certainly give you one. So, while the crib would be welcome, I'll just stay around a bit and put my head on your lap.

Andy blew in from the front earlier in the night and is talking with Marg on the typewriter across the room. He turned in a couple of good pieces on the Rhine crossing... stuck his neck way out to get them, too. He'll be going back up on Monday.

I have two letters from you, angel... Feb. 17 and 27. We'll talk about them later.

I've been as busy as the devil all week again, mainly with the Rhine crossing and getting a four-page VE supplement ready. Consequently, my correspondence with everybody is suffering badly.

Since Carl has been up here in place of Bill Spear, the paper has fallen off a lot. The paper goes in an hour or so late every night, he doesn't take the pains Bill did, etc. I try to do ten jobs in one, but it isn't enough. I probably couldn't do any better, and am not anxious to try until I could be sure I could turn out a good product. The trouble with the paper lies on the desk and Carl just isn't qualified. Meanwhile, it is just a paper.

Paris is going a little better than we are, but not much.

Sometimes, I think I'm too much of a perfectionist, but I usually conclude that my observations are correct.

Bud came in last night and said the Ninth Air Force wants to borrow him for a few months to write a "history" for it. His trip to the Pacific, incidentally, is ice cold.

Received a letter from Bette today. Reminded me she would soon be 21, and that she's beginning to think she's an old maid!!!

Your letter of Feb. 17, clearly showed the "foul mood" you were in... and I repeat, there isn't a reason in the world why you have to put up with Morrow or anyone else who wears you down.

I couldn't care less if they were my best friends. I know what Morrow is when he's on the bottle.

So, listen, sweetheart, tell them off!

By now, you know I'm not headed for the replacement depot, nor is Benny. So, you women just keep your panties on and stop worrying.

Your Feb. 26 "bit" was a good, long one, angel. I know how you feel when seven letters come at once. I only wish you could get seven every day. I haven't heard from any of the gang in ever so long. Can't blame them, though, with children, etc. And, I haven't been writing them much.

By the way, you started to talk about Thanksgiving Day in Flushing, then crossed something out and said you decided to "censor that." Well, my little plum, I found a method to un-censor it and your face should be red.

I loved the gloppy kiss you put on the end of the letter. I needed it, hon. Time for your little man to retire, sweetheart. Be a good girl and keep a big smile on your beautiful face for me. Goodnight.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

March 11, 1945—New York

Darling,

May I come in? Been neglecting you the last couple of nights. Dearest darling, the last time I was around was Wednesday night so I'll have to bring you up to date.

I stayed home Wednesday and Thursday to get rid of my cold. Called Time, Inc. and told them I wouldn't be back. Friday, I started my new job. Let's see... Thursday night I met Jane and Joe at NBC and we went to Louis' for dinner. We met Marg later and tried to see Lena Horne at the Capitol but there were too many with the same idea, so we saw a newsreel instead.., very good, too... the pictures of Iwo Jima. They were really terrific. We all came home and talked for hours. Joe decided to stay on our sofa... your pajamas happened to be clean so he wore those instead of Jane's. Somehow or other they are more becoming on you.

It's really funny the way Joe always ends up in our company, but kind of nice. At least we know he approves of us.

Friday night he came in for dinner carrying two bottles of Burgundy. We didn't have too much to offer him but he seemed to enjoy it. He eats more now. We all decided to go to the corner movie... saw two awful ones.. "The Suspect" and "Climax." After that we stopped in a bar and had a couple of drinks before the curfew. It was so late, Joe stayed on the sofa again.

I didn't work Saturday so we decided to go to the zoo. Joe and Marg were going along. We had a French lesson at one and then walked over to the office, stopping on the way for a shoe shine. By the time we got there, the weather became very gray and doubtful.

Hodenfield was in the office, along with Buck, Morrow and Joe. We were all discussing the Pacific prospect. Seems Llewellyn has everything shaping up in Washington and we aren't to be surprised if Buck goes.

We all decided to go around to the Little Campus for a drink and then go and see a Laurel and Hardy picture Joe suggested. You probably know what happened. Hod, Joe, Marg, Jane and I went in about four o'clock and left the Little Campus at nine-thirty feeling very good. We had dinner in the interim. We adjourned to 5L and Libby and Morrow joined the party for awhile. Their presence was a little awkward, Morrow being on the wagon. Everyone left fairly early except Hod, and he stayed and stayed. We couldn't get rid of him. The evening ended up with our having to put Hod to bed on the sofa. Joe I don't mind, but I don't like people like Hod sleeping on our sofa. I kept remembering you saying you didn't like him too much. I don't either. I had more than my share to drink, darling. I was still a lady and I remember everything that happened, but I'm a bit ashamed for getting that way without you around. Know what I mean?

I certainly paid plenty for it because I don't believe I've ever been more under the weather. Jane, Marg and Kay Kunzelman walked in Central Park all afternoon, but I knew I'd never make it so I stayed home on the sofa and slept a little of it off. Marg and Kay came back and we all had supper. They left a little while ago.

Marg has been terribly worried about Andy, especially after hearing about his getting lost for 17 hours. She's had only two letters since he went back.

The MGM deal is still hanging fire. They are rewriting the contract to agree with Steve. He feels very confident that it will happen. He would like you to give me seven names of those who would be useful as technical advisors to hold in reserve. It may be that because of the timeliness of the picture they will want to rush through the production, so that will mean the story will have to be written in a hurry. It all seems very complicated to me. I sure hope this guy knows what he's doing. I am not getting all excited, though, darling, so I won't be disappointed. The whole thing seems a little fantastic to me, but perhaps it's because of the impression Steve leaves me with. The one comforting thought is that I can't believe a concern as large as MGM would go as far as they have on the deal without getting in touch with the proper authorities in Washington for permission to do it, etc. It may be the deal will go through all right but the right people won't benefit by it. That's why the contract is being rewritten, I feel sure, to take care of that. There will be no salary involved, of course, but I understand expenses would be paid. It would be a good thing to accept I think, not only for you to come home, which is reason enough for me, but it might make all the difference in the world to have contacts like that after this is all over and we are just Mr. and Mrs. K.

I feel now that if it is good for us, darling, that probably it will happen. If not, then perhaps it means that it wouldn't have been right for us. Perhaps that's not exactly the right attitude but Slesinger seems like such an awful person to me that I can't see anything good coming from him. But then, that's only my impression. Perhaps underneath all the profanity and rye he drinks he's all right. I hope so. It would be a pretty wonderful thing for all of us if it does go through.

The news has been so wonderful all week. I was home when I heard of the Rhine crossing... probably silly but I cried, it was so wonderful. I have such a good feeling now, not thinking about the Hollywood deal, either... that perhaps it won't be too awfully long.

It seems that each day makes me miss you more. It doesn't make much sense not having you here. I miss you so many ways. Gatherings like last night... I wanted you to be there. The little dinners we rig up out of nothing. It just doesn't add up at all.

Did I tell you Joe decided you should have been the priest instead of Father John? I'm awfully glad, of course, darling, that you aren't. Heaven knows what would have happened to me.

You'll laugh but you know what I remembered the other night trying to go to sleep? Remember my waking you up those few mornings before we were married? The first morning your door was closed and I hesitated some few minutes before I opened the door. I thought of how warm it was and wondered if maybe you slept in your birthday suit, so I had to peek before I came in to see if it was safe. I opened the door a crack first. I was so happy, darling, just to watch you sleep. I couldn't love you any more than I do, darling... just wouldn't be possible.

Funny, I was thinking tonight watching Jane. I couldn't ever think of them except together. They're certainly perfectly matched. I'd like to think that people will think of us like that... think of you and then me automatically. Don't you wonder at my ideas sometimes, darling? I like passing them on to you.

We're all wondering where the next edition will start. I thought Cologne would probably be next... wondering whether you would start the next one.

I called El tonight and they received a letter from you written the 28th, telling of your visit to Eddie's grave. She read it to Pop and he seemed to take it fairly well. He doesn't talk about it very much... not at all with Father John.

Darling, did I tell you at long last the bond department is recognizing our marriage? January's bond arrived addressed to me. You may have to check on this. With the new system they have now, they wait each month for a list from the finance officer of each outfit giving the names of purchasers of bonds before they write the bonds and mail them. I still haven't received November's. It may be that something got mixed up along the line. Perhaps you could check on it. I wrote to the department when September's was so long in coming and that was what they told me. It finally came in December some time.

It's swell not having anyone around but us. I like company, but it's good to have a night now and then without them.

Jane and I were discussing Joe just now and how well he gets along with us... always going here and there with Marg, Jane and me. Marg calls him the "sexless wonder." For Pete's sake, don't ever tell him that, because he has been so nice to us. You'd laugh at some of the conversations he sits in on. We're glad, though, that we all get on so well. That makes it good.

I'm really weary, darling, and not feeling too good. I'll take a shower and let you put me to bed. I'm glad you're around, Mr. K. even it is so darned far away. I can be happy at least knowing what we have had. I do miss you so, probably more than what's good for me, but I just can't help it.

Will you wait while I shower? Back now and all ready to be tucked in. I love you so much. May I have an extra kiss this time? Don't deserve it after being bad last night but I sort of need one now, please. Goodnight, my darling. Be back tomorrow.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

March 12, 1945—New York

Darling,

My second day on my new job. Still a bit of a strain. There is quite a bit of responsibility and a lot of work entailed but I'm glad. It was what I needed.

The job at Time only taxed my physical muscles and my little mind would run rampant. Not that I minded thinking about you all day, but I think this job will be better for me. Besides, I have free Saturdays so when you come home if that should happen to be your day off... that will work out swell.

You should see the glamorous models running around this place. They sort of knock your eyes out. They make all these gorgeous clothes outside our office. Sort of fun to watch them. Of course, they're only the best and too much for even my Champagne taste.

We had a very glamorous French teacher tonight... the kind we had imagined in Paris. She was patient and very nice to us. We aren't progressing so well, darling. The words are a mouthful and you have to say them so fast. I can't seem to get the knack of thinking French, and I think that's the secret.

I was really hoping for a letter from you today but no luck. Sort of needed one. Jane had two recent ones. I'm awfully anxious to hear your reaction on the Hollywood deal. Slesinger's secretary called Marg and asked if I could act as Power of Attorney in case something should break quickly. I'm not going to do anything until I know what you think about it all, if it's ok, etc. I hope Andy and Bud have supplied more details for you because I sure don't know too much about the setup.

After French tonight, we met Marg and Joe to see the movie Joe's been wanting to see... Laurel and Hardy in "Too Much Trouble" or something like that ["Nothing But Trouble"]. It was funny. I sort of enjoyed it along with Joe. Joe is sleeping now on the sofa in my red pajamas. They were the only ones we had





British conductor Leopold Stokowski (1882-1977) was one of the most popular conductors of the 20th century, known for never using a baton. He was the conductor in the movie “Fantasia” and was married to Gloria Vanderbilt for 10 years; she was 42 years younger than he was.

around. It was sort of startling to see them on him at first. They are so darn bright. I think Jane’s blue ones are more becoming to him. I hope you won’t tease him when you see him. We have enjoyed his company. He’s been swell to us.

It’s a nasty night out, darling, a fine one from our corner and a nice crackling fire. Darling, I want to be with you so much. One of my impatient moods tonight... excuse me, please. It will soon be four months and tonight it seems as awfully long time ago since Thanksgiving Day when I saw you last.

I’d better let you tuck me in, darling, while I can still make a little sense. It is late but I’d like to stay longer. May I come over to your house for a few minutes? I’m cold now from sitting here in the alcove with the window open. This letter is kind of short, but I’ll be back tomorrow. We’re all going to see Stokowski tomorrow night early. I’m ready now, darling. I love you so. I’ll wear you out telling you when I see you. I don’t think I’ll be able to let you out of my sight... just tag along all the time. Don’t ever stop loving me... think I’d shrivel up and die if you did. Goodnight... a special kiss for being so nice.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

March 13, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

I’m setting a record tonight by writing two letters, one to Earl who has written to me five times, and the “pause that refreshes” with you.

I’d give most anything to be able to sit on the floor and just look at you curled up on the sofa writing to me. I’d like to be sitting there without you knowing it, then quietly whisper, “Hello sweetheart.” I wonder if you would jump?

Your letters of March 3 and 4 came yesterday, wondering, among other things, why some of the fellows in New York received extensions on their orders. That entire New York deal has become so confused I don’t even think about it any more.

I heard from Paris that Hodenfield and Graff are due back “in a few days,” with a possibility of Giblin being with them. Also, that Joe had his time extended until Bill Spear was ready to take over the bureau.

We were given a rough idea on postwar plans for *Stars and Stripes* here, and it seemed to include only one 16-page paper, but published in the section of Germany occupied by American troops. It also included a very large staff working in New York.

What you said about Bud and Andy possibly going back to do that Hollywood script is news to me. If they know about it they haven’t said anything.

You can say that again, about the “gold-bricking” going on in the New York office, too. I more or less expected it, though.

When you mentioned the possibility of you and Jane getting summer jobs at a resort, all I could say was, “What a girl... still on the go.” I think you have the “wanderlust” bad. Do you think I’ll have to tie you down and make a happy housewife of you?

In any case, if you want to go to the mountains, or shore, you have daddy’s permission... how’s that?

I’ll have to confess that I didn’t tell all about the Turkish bath. I don’t know why I didn’t mention it before this, because it almost floored all of us at the time.

In Belgium, or Liege, at least, it seems to be quite natural to have woman attendants in the baths. They direct you to a private locker, then turn the key on it when you head for the shower. In the shower room you find another woman regulating the hot and cold water, frequently reaching into the shower to turn them on and off, while the shower is occupied.

What’s more, they move from shower to shower washing the backs of those inside. Naturally, with a lot of soldiers in there every day, a state of confusion existed for awhile. Most of the GI customers follow through with the custom and have their backs washed. Not me, however. I still have a certain amount of modesty.

The entrance to the pool is off the shower room, so I wear a pair of trunks to the shower, then into the pool.

Andy and I had a swim the other day before he went back to the front. I did something I wouldn’t do ordinarily, and that was to let him use the gloves you sent to me... the Abercrombie & Fitch mittens.

He said he was using an old beat-up pair of GI wool gloves, so I offered him mine, since I won’t be using them now. You don’t mind, do you?

Say, do you know, I think you would look gorgeous with an upswept hair-do. Why not have a snapshot taken now, and let me see how you look. Not that my decision will count one way or the other, but I’d like to see you.

Earl’s last letter mentioned the dinner you had for them, and the subsequent visit to 195. He said I should have been the priest and John the *Star and Stripes* man.

I was able to go to Confession for the first time during Lent on Sunday. Instead of going to the Belgian Church, which is nearby, I walked a mile and a half to a GI chapel and went to Confession before Mass.



Aerial view of bomb damage in Cologne, March 1945.

There is a possibility of me going up to Cologne on Thursday to have a look at a newspaper plant there. We don't intend to move from here, but we may do the composing of the

paper here and have about 150,000 copies printed in Cologne every day. It would ease the circulation trip tremendously.

And now, it's time to "let's put out the lights and go to sleep."

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

March 15, 1945—New York

My darling,

I wasn't going to write you tonight but I couldn't sleep so decided to talk to you instead of looking at the ceiling.

The bureaucrats at auxiliary's morale is at a low ebb. For three nights we've been sitting around staring at each other. I think it's because the Pacific is forming a big cloud on the horizon and we're all wondering how long it will be before...

Benny finally broke the silence from Paris after six days of no messages. We were all beginning to wonder. Seems the new Colonel is trying to cut down on expenses.

I sent you a cable today in the hope that you have received my letters giving you as much detail as I could on the MGM deal. Yesterday we learned that the deal is in Gen. Solbert's and Gen. Osborne's

hands for consideration. The best one yet is that Bridger [have not been able to trace this name] has gotten wind of it somehow and is trying to work through King Features to get in on it. He is contacting Slesinger. It's just one of those things that has to be sweated out. Steve merely wanted me to get a legal power of attorney to sign a contract that's being set up by Farrar & Rinehart to present to MGM showing that you fellows are under contract to them. There will be nothing binding, so we're told, all we have to do is accept a dollar and if the book is never written we return the dollar. The pieces are beginning to straighten out and something may come of it yet, if people like Bridger don't try to horn in on the deal.

I went over to 195 last night and washed the slip covers. Everyone was fine. Annice was a bit fussy from her vaccination so we brought her downstairs. She was in her glory then. She knows me now but the closest she comes to saying, "Billee" is "Biks." Isn't that something? She says, "hit the road," "John," "Pop," "Betsy," "Terry," and other names but she refuses to say "Bette," or our names. She is so adorable.

We all had egg and bacon sandwiches about ten o'clock and, of course, Pop brought home a pitcher of beer. He was glued to the radio, though, listening to the fights. It's good to be able to go over there.

Marg is still waiting to hear from Andy. When you mention Andy or talk about him, I always tell her but that's a poor substitute. She doesn't know where he is at all now.

I'm so happy the boxes arrived. There are still a couple more to come with the items you mentioned in them, except for the toothbrush... that I'm not sure.

I wondered if you liked the picture. I thought perhaps it was a little too much of me, but that was such a perfect shot at home [this picture has not been traced]. I wanted you to be reminded, too. The pate de foi gras was a joke, of course. I'm glad Benny enjoyed it, however. Benny is as lonesome as you, if that's possible.

Jane, of course, believes that no one can possibly miss anyone as much as she misses Benny, but I miss you so, my darling. I can't even talk about it.

As far as I know, Morrow and Libby are still courting which is awfully silly if you ask me. I can just see myself going to a movie or dinner, being escorted to what was once our home and bidding you goodnight and sending you on your way to your hotel... most ridiculous thing I ever heard of.

I'd think you'd rather be in Liege, too, away from all the brass. Jane had a letter from Benny this week telling her the only reason he has remained in Paris is because he had the hope she might have been able to join him, but even he has given up hope along those lines and now mentions being almost sure of being sent Pacific-wards.

Two of the fellows, Russ Jones and another fellow left London ten days ago by boat and haven't arrived yet. Giblin and Graff are sweating out their trip back... rather, their departure.

I didn't know you had a civilian consultant. That's a good idea. I hope the manpower shortage will be relieved shortly. That angle has been in the back of my mind on this MGM deal; that the *Stars and Stripes* could say they needed all the men they had and couldn't spare any to make a movie.

The biggest question in my mind is your reaction, because as of now I've heard nothing. Certainly, I want you to do what you think is right and best for you. I want you to be happy in what you're doing and I definitely don't want to drag you into anything that isn't good for you. I've been so anxious on this angle.

They received your letter about visiting the cemetery. I'm glad you wrote them. That, together with Johnnie Ryan's letter will make Pop feel a little better.

I know how lonely you are, darling, when you pour out two glasses of champagne. Remember, it tickles my nose, but reminds me of a certain cocktail lounge.

Did I tell you I have the snapshot of you and Earl? I love it. You look just as you did when I said goodbye to you here at 5L. You still look as if you are keeping the extra weight. You look wonderful, darling. I love you so.

I was remembering last night how you would scold me... call me off with such a hurt tone when I'd bite your chin, remember? I loved to do that and tickle your ear. The hussy in me, maybe. You called me that, I know.

There was an article in the Journal last night telling about the Russian raid Warren went on, written by a correspondent who just returned from Moscow.



B-17 at a Russian airfield in 1944. "Operation Frantic" was a series of seven shuttle bombing operations during World War II conducted by American aircraft based in Great Britain and Southern Italy which then landed at three Soviet airfields in Ukraine. The operation began in June, 1944 and ended in September. Warren must have gone on one of the first of these missions.

I forgot to mention Joe, Marg and Jane went out to dinner last night while I went to 195. Joe stayed over... they were still here when I got home. Last night I had clean pajamas for him. He didn't have to wear the red ones. I don't like him wearing yours, hon, but there doesn't seem to be any alternative. He's staying again tonight. As he says, they'll probably raise our rent. Every night seems as if we all manage to get together... Marg, Joe, Jane and I. He's a strange guy, isn't he, but

one can't help but like him. He must enjoy our company, else he wouldn't come night after night, as well as Marg. They're both probably lonesome just as we are.

Keeps getting later, but I am a bit sleepy. See what you do to me, darling? Just talking to you quiets me down and relaxes me so maybe now I can sleep. Joe and Jane are peacefully sleeping. I'm in the dinette. I just have to hop in so you can tuck me in. Darling, it's awful isn't it? I miss you so and love you so much more, darling. Tuck me in nice. I love you. Goodnight, my dearest.

All my love and kisses, always, your sweetheart

March 17, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

Ah, 'tis not like the old days when Mar. 17 was a day! 'Tis a great day, all right, but not for the Irish, I'm afraid.

'Tis embarrassed I am, when the likes of Swedes like Larsen, Hungarians like Zumwalt, Dutchmen like Moora can point a veritable finger of scorn at the homeland of Eire, which has maintained its peace of mind through the war. And my cheeks blush as red as a rose of Kilarney when I hear of an Eisenhower and a Scotch-Englishman like Patton and a limey like Hodges and a Scotsman like Simpson making the news of a day. Worst of all... and my heroic ancestors who sacrificed themselves during the "trouble" with the bloody traitors of England are spinning in their graves... a North of Irelander like Montgomery is in the thick of the fight. [The Republic of Ireland maintained neutrality during WWII, although they cooperated with the Allies; ironically, their merchant shipping was continually damaged by both Allied and Axis nations.]

Where, oh where, are the fighting men of the old country on this St. Patrick's Day?

Had a letter yesterday and another one today, darling. Feb. 28 and March 3. I thought I'd be getting a later one in which you were excited about Steve Slesinger's pipe dream that I might come home again soon.

Andy dropped in yesterday and showed me a part of a letter he received from Marg. It spoke of Slesinger making progress with MGM on the picture on *Stars and Stripes* and planning to see [a general] in Washington about coming home to be technical advisors for the picture.

Careful, don't get enthusiastic. I'm not, because I can't see even the slightest possibility of that taking place. Bud and Andy may, but I can't see where I fit in. Besides, I'm beginning to think Mr. Slesinger has a couple of screws loose.

Say, how about a picture of you and Jane in your new coats? At least you, anyway.

Life continues uneventful here, sweetheart. Rise anywhere from 10:00 to 12:00, eat, start work at 1:30, eat at 6:00, work again until 12:00 or 1:00, sometimes later if the news breaks late.

I've become rather friendly with one of the Belgians who work in the composing room. His name is Normand Dorman and he makes up the pages with me. He has two children he is raising himself.

His wife died eight years ago. Now and then I give him cigarettes, a can of milk or “C” rations, canned butter, etc., that I can lift from our rations. He came back with a gift for me the other night... a half pint of alleged Cognac. I sampled it, but when it brought tears I gave the rest of it away.

I had a letter from Morrow yesterday. He asked me if I could get an extension of time for him in order to consolidate his possible reconciliation with Libby. He says he hasn't had a drink in a week and a half and believes he and Libby can patch up the trouble. All I could do was to pass the request on to Benny in Paris.

Time to go to bed now. Gosh I get awfully tired after midnight these nights. Sure wish I could have you run your fingers through my hair and rub my forehead. So, good night for now, sweetheart. Miss me and love me lots.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

March 17, 1945—New York

My dearest,

Happy St. Patrick's Day... it is, you know, and Mrs. K. didn't send Mr. K. a card. I bought one, lost it and it showed up yesterday. Every time I'd think to go get another something would happen.



Billee on the Jersey City Ferry, February 1945.

Didn't work today (more about that) so we slept late then went shopping for a few items. We missed the parade, however, and it was such a beautiful day for one. We both wore suits... had no use for a top coat. Tonight it's a wee bit cooler.

We went up to the office for a few minutes to get some pictures Earl had of you. The ones you all took in Paris. Gosh, hon, you always take such a super picture. I love them. Some more to add to our collection. He said he sent the ones he took of me on the ferry boat. I didn't see them, so I don't know if they are good or not. Also, he's been waiting for an answer to his five letters. He says now if you do answer then maybe he'll just snub you.

Joe, Jane and I went to the Commodore and had a scotch and soda by way of celebrating our seventh anniversary, then came home. We cooked dinner for us... Joe went home for a change. I baked a

cake to take over to 195. Jane washed, then I wrote Mom a long letter and showered... washed my hair, too. It's now ten thirty. Jane has retired, believe it or not and I'm in my usual spot in the alcove. Jane has a cold and doesn't feel too good. She's so stubborn I can't seem to make her do anything for it. She tries to use the psychological method that she isn't sick when she is, and keeps going on. I think she'll be all right if she gets a little rest.

Funny how different people are. No one could be any more unlike Jane than I am. I get awfully annoyed at her sometimes and her ideas. She probably gets annoyed at me, too, because I won't agree with her. Too, she thinks nobody could miss anyone as much as she misses Benny or love anyone as much, etc. I've told you that before, I guess.

Mr. Rooney took us all to dinner last night... Joe, Marg, Jane and I. You met him, I think. I enjoyed him lots. He's a little like Andy... more friendly I'd say, but really swell. He goes to Asheville quite frequently. He was there when Andy and Marg were there.

Joe and Hod will go back a week from Monday. Bill Spear finally arrived at Ft. Hamilton today after spending fifteen days on the water. He must have been paddling a canoe. He's getting a two-day pass and will report to work right away so there'll be no need for Joe to stick around. We're going to miss him. He's spent an awful lot of time with us, especially since Carl went back. I know his family must be annoyed at him. This week for instance he spent four nights on our sofa. We don't mind, but it would be nice if he'd go home for clean clothes. He's a strange little guy. You wonder what goes on in that little brain of his.

I was kind of hoping I'd have a letter but Monday seems to be the day for letters.

Mrs. K. is among the ranks of the unemployed. The job at Hattie Carnegie's didn't work out. I'll tell you about it sometime. [Billee told Anne that she quit after she got a good look at the terrible working conditions of the people who made the luxury brand clothing and hats.] I have a very good job I can go to at the Manhattan Savings Bank, but Uncle Sam won't let me have it since it isn't essential. I learned yesterday that cutting stencils was an essential job... that's a laugh. And it involves me with the U.S. Employment Service. They won't give me a release except to go to another essential industry so I'm liable to end up on an assembly line.

What would be super swell now would be if this Hollywood deal went through real quick like and they rushed you guys home. Wishful thinking... seems much too good to be true. It's in the Army's hands now. All they have to do is say yes or no.

It's funny. I rattle on and I don't even know what you think of the deal. I told Jane that I wouldn't be surprised if you'd refuse after what you said in the letter about writing the book. I want you to do what you think is right, because more than anything else I want you to be happy in your work.

Do you remember our first St. Patrick's Day? You called me from Fort Dix. I was so excited. You called me your "colleen," I remember. Mom said you had more money than good sense to be calling me so many times, but I loved it and you so much. That seems like a long time ago.

Soon it will be four months since you left. Tonight it seems like four years. I could almost be bitter tonight but I love you so much, I can't be. I can't help but wonder how long it will be this time.

Then, there's the Pacific looming. The outlook isn't very bright. I guess I've been listening to the bureaucrats too much. They are a pessimistic lot. What do you think?

Let's talk about us. Let's go back seven months ago. August 17, 1944... such a wonderful date. This time that night we were sleeping peacefully... our first sleep as Mr. & Mrs. Kiley. I'll bet I was the first bride carried over that threshold without shoes on. Remember, I kicked them off almost immediately. It didn't take you long after Al and Dot departed to carry me over, either, as if you had been waiting impatiently for them to leave instead of me, as I was accused. They were three perfect days... just us and no one else. I loved the walks, going to the ball game. The Sunday afternoon reading the papers and listening to the radio. Going to Mass at the little church near the hotel. Being with you every second of the twenty-four hours... having you love me. Then the days that followed, so proud of showing you off to the family.

I was glad we went home... that was good, too. I loved having you scold me and fuss over me when I didn't feel well... being so nice to Mom... everything. They were the three happiest months of my life. We will have more, I know, but they'll always be special. I remember every now and then... often in fact... I can still feel your shoulder next to mine the last time we said our prayers together at 195. I think it was just about four months tomorrow night. I do miss you so much, darling.

I've been writing an hour now. I'm not very sleepy yet, but I'd better call it a day. Are you ready to tuck me in? I don't look very glamorous to come over to your house because my hair is all pinned up. Do you mind? I wish I were smart, hon. I'd figure out a way I could be near you. There must be some way. Goodnight, my dearest. Here's a special, special anniversary kiss for you. I love you so very much. Keep well, my darling, and love me.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, your Billee

Do you ever get tired of being called "darling?" I swing from one to another like a monkey swings through a tree. I just read this letter through, something I very seldom do. Probably a good thing, too, because very likely a few would be torn up before they reached their destination. I love you.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

March 19, 1945—New York

Darling,

It's very early for me to be having a date with you, but thought I'd dash a few lines off to enclose in the packet. Marg, Joe and Bill Spear are due to arrive and they can put this in tomorrow's mail.

Received your message today, too, regarding the book. I thought surely Bud or Andy would have enlightened you by now as to what Slesinger is working on but in any event, you should have my letter telling as much as I know about it. This is hectic, trying to know something in a hurry without telling the whole E.T.O.

I think I have a job... at least I start Wednesday morning... right around the corner between 7th and 8th Avenues in a branch office of Standard Oil. Goes under the name of Stanco Distributors. It

entails working with the company auditors. The salary isn't as much as I wanted but being able to eat here at the apartment will make up for a lot. The man who interviewed me was very nice and seemed to think I would fit in all right. I have my fingers crossed. The job is temporary from two to three months but that will be fine. He said that if I'd want to, he'd find something else for me after this project if it works out. I'm still peeved about not being able to take the bank job. I just happened to think, this letter about my job isn't going to make much sense if you get it before the one I wrote Saturday night and mailed yesterday so don't get alarmed. Everything is under control and that letter will explain all.

I have spring fever. I've been having a good siege of the whim-whams. Came home with daffodils today. Jane's been laughing at me all day. She's home with a cold. We could call it a spring cold almost. Outside it's raining very softly, a nice quiet shower, that makes me miss you terribly, as usual.

Jane and I went to 195 for dinner yesterday. As I told you, I baked a chocolate cake Saturday night and we carried it over in a hat box. We looked as if we were carrying a box full of eggs the way we had it balanced to keep the darn cake from slipping. Even the driver laughed at us. Uncle John was in for the first time since New Year's. He looked pretty good. We were so glad to see him again. How he loves Annice. Mrs. O'Connor was in, too, with Terry and one of the girls. They had all been to a St. Patrick's party the night before.

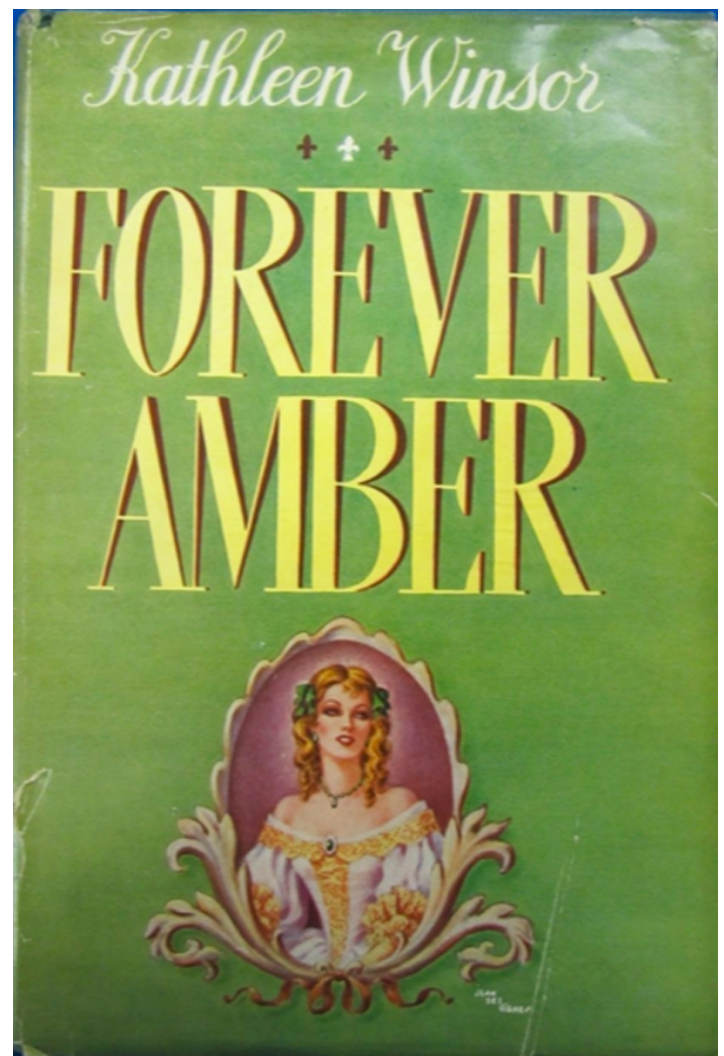
After dinner, Dane, El, the baby and I went walking in Lincoln Park. Also, hon, we took a few pictures in Lincoln Park. One of these Saturdays, Jane and I are going to meet El and go riding in the park. I haven't been since I was a little girl but it should be fun. The day was gorgeous... spring-like again.

Jane is sitting here buried in "Forever Amber." It must be good, for all I've been able to get out of her is a grunt now and then. Someone at the news room loaned it to her.

I found something cute for you today for Easter. I thought it would make you smile. You can tell I have spring fever now.

Since today is Monday and for a number of weeks now my mail has been arriving on Monday, but today, no mail and I sort of wanted one. Benny gets his over faster than you. Jane had three last week and one today.

Maybe Bill Spear will have one. It'll be a bit old but I won't mind. I thought he'd be gone to Washington but I guess that's tomorrow.



Forever Amber, an historical novel set in 17th century England, was the best-selling US novel of the 1940s. Even though it was banned in some states because of explicit sex scenes, it sold over 100,000 copies in its first week of release, and went on to sell over three million copies. Forever Amber was also responsible for popularizing "Amber" as a given name for girls in the 20th century.

I sure hope your watch gets fixed this week, in time for Joe to take it back with him. I don't want any trouble with them about it.

I just got another grunt out of Jane. This is one of my talkative days and I can't find anyone to talk with. I'll probably wear poor Bill out with questions.

Annice was so cute yesterday. El has a new light green coat and hat set for her. Her hair seems to be curling more. I wonder if ours will have curly hair. I was always so envious of my two sisters because theirs did.

The news continues to be so good. It just has to be over soon. The girl I talked with today at the employment service says she has several overseas jobs but the one drawback is that your husband must not be serving in the same field. She offered me a job in the Far East. I declined, however. I didn't think you'd approve.

I'd better close for now so I can have this ready when they arrive. You'll have to stay around a little while to tuck me in tonight. Hope you don't mind. I wish you were here, and miss you, so much.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

March 20, 1945—Liege

Evening sweetheart,

We're not alone tonight. Several of the fellows are staying in the office to write, but I can feel alone with you. I have two more of your packages which arrived today, together with two letters.

First of all, let's go into your cable of yesterday. I quote: "Send legal power of attorney facilitating sealing of contract on book if you approve. I love you."

It puzzled me, so I asked Andy, who was here for a day, if he could throw some light on it. So, he furnished my two-word reply, "What book?" I haven't the slightest idea what you mean, but will send it to you anyway. When I asked Andy if he had any ideas, he grinned and said, "Slesinger."

I don't know who is trying to sell you what, so it's a mystery to me.

In one of your letters you spoke of getting the money from Slesinger, and that he had first option on anything I wrote. That would be fine, except that I'm not in a position to write anything, as long as I'm inside.

That should answer your question about "my name" not appearing on any stories you have seen.

As you suspected, I probably would be happier in the field but I can do a better job here until someone else comes along. If and when they come along, I believe I'll try to make the shift.

Now, about the packages. They were super. I'm eating the maple sugar candy now. Gosh, I have so many rolls of mints and "lifesavers" I can open a confectionery shop. I received the air mail envelopes, coffee, olives, magazines, cigarettes, etc., too.

Your description of the dinner for Joe, Morrow, Earl and Rita brought that old familiar feeling back. That's when I really miss you... when I know someone else is getting the reflection of that beautiful puss of yours.

I loved hearing you say I was the best husband in the "whole world." That's what I aim to be, sweetheart. And I'll be awfully disappointed if I don't succeed. I haven't given you an unhappy moment yet, have I?

So, now my little bundle of excitement is an employee of Hattie Carnegie, is she? You could have done a lot worse, angel. It's one of the firms in New York, as I recall.

I didn't think you would be very happy punching those stencils very much longer. In fact, I was certain you would have given it up long before you did.

Incidentally, you said something about finances not being very good. I wish you would give me the complete story, hon. I have been waiting until I had \$100 saved before sending it to you and now I have \$115. Tomorrow, I'll get a money order and send it right away.

My expenses haven't been much... about a dollar a week for laundry, a couple of dollars a month for a woman to clean our room, about five dollars a month for cigarettes and a few dollars to lose in an occasional card game. That leaves me with about \$35 a month left over from the \$50 I draw. That would make it about right for the December, January and February salaries I've drawn. I get a little discouraged not being able to make any more headway than that. I want to have at least \$2,000 in cash set aside when I get out of this damned Army, but at this rate I'll be lucky to have \$200.

I guess New York is biting into your money, too. In any case, you continue to go on as you see fit, and if you have to use up all our cash on hand, go to it. That's an order.

I was just doing a little figuring on the bonds and conclude that we have only \$1,125 (matured at \$1,500) that I've saved in two and half years. Not much progress there, either. Well, I guess I'll just have to quit this job and get another. How about it?

I'm a bit worried over that \$35 salary of yours. That's a drop from "Time" isn't it? If you had tough sledding then, it will be worse now.

I'll close now and try to drop in tomorrow night again. Look beautiful now, for your good night kiss. Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

March 21, 1945—New York

My darling,

It's me again. Haven't been here since early Monday night... been a busy little bee.

Bill gave me a good account of where you live, etc., so I'll go on from there. Incidentally, I think he's a nice guy. He isn't on Jane's team because he doesn't live and breathe *Stars and Stripes*. She judges people too quickly, but then so do I. I could see where you both probably got along fine together.

I couldn't help but smile when he said you were still doing exercises. He told, too, how long it took you to go to bed at night. You weren't so slow when we were together, or maybe I'm slow too and didn't notice.

He told me, too, that he thought you were really enjoying the work. I like to hear it from someone else. That's been my chief worry. He said that you might have gained a little more weight. That's a fine thing. Here I am trying my darnedest to lose a little and you keep putting it on. Oh, well, if it makes you happy then I'll love you as a "roly poly."

One of the things he told me you haven't mentioned is the place called "Clip-Clop," a bar run by a gal named Lillie who has B.O. but nevertheless has taken a shine to you. I'm jealous of Lillie. Do you mind? No wonder you're getting fat if you drink whatever that name is... anyway cognac and eggs. There must be a million calories in it. Hon, I'm only teasing you, really. I'm glad you've found a place where you can relax a bit.

We all had quite a chat. They went home fairly early except Joe... he slept on the sofa. It was good to talk to someone who had seen you only a month ago,

I loved to hear how you are picking up the language so successfully and the fact that all the printers have you tagged as a prizefighter. That must have been the effect of our little matches. I would have loved to have been a bit rougher with you, but I couldn't forget we were in an apartment house. There will come a day. Remember, the first or second day after we were married, you tried to pin me down. I said I could get loose and did. That was only a sample, so you'd better keep in good form.

Yesterday, since I was between jobs and Jane's cold kept her home, Marg and Joe played hooky and we all went to the Bronx Zoo. It was a gorgeous day. I wore only a suit. We saw all the animals, ate hot dogs and peanuts. It was fun but would have been more fun with you. Couldn't help but think about that all the while. No matter where I go, I keep wishing you were there. I see things I'd like to point out to you or tell you at the end of the day and it entails writing it out. It isn't like talking to you.

After wearing ourselves out we went to a little French restaurant on 57th street and had dinner. Parted our respective ways and came home about 8:30, showered and fell into bed. Too much nature, I guess. We just weren't used to it. Can you imagine Joe tramping all over the Bronx Zoo with us? He definitely isn't the outdoor type.

Best of all, a letter came from you yesterday and today written the 7th and 10th. Not too bad time, but I'm getting used to that now. I can't understand... you mention seeing both Bud and Andy but apparently neither have given you any information concerning the Slesinger deal. Nothing new on that deal as yet.

The news is so very good. I get optimistic but then the question arises... what then? The U.S. Employment service is recruiting typists and clerks to go to Arabia, Switzerland and Paris but I hesitate to take such a step until I know for sure that you would be part of the Army of Occupation.

I know, darling, I shouldn't cross bridges until I come to them, but if you do have to stay over a year or more after this mess is over I wouldn't sit it out without a fight. So many questions in my mind but

what good does it do? It all comes out the same: nobody knows. I'm sorry, hon, if I seem to worry but I can't help it.

The business about Morrow is, of course, cleaned up. As far as I know he and Libby are still "courtin."

I told Earl how busy you'd been but he's still a bit peeved that you haven't written. He wants to work with you when he goes back. I wonder if he means to turn into a desk man.

I'm relieved to hear I'm not being taken "for granted" and that you do get jealous, except I don't know of what. Maybe Joe sleeping on our sofa.

I like to hear you sound off, darling. Don't keep anything from me. Makes me feel like I'm married to have you scold me. Not that I'm not "well married" but I always say there's nothing like a good fight. Must be the Irish I have in me.

I haven't heard from Lee and Harry in ages. Just got a letter off again tonight to them as well as one to Mom, Warren and Aunt Kee [Katherine].

Marg has been taking a few of my letters and putting them in the packet, too. If you get this in time, Benny's birthday is the 25th of March. Call him and wish him a Happy Birthday for me or a belated one... very likely it will be the latter.

So glad to hear Andy wrote to Marg. I told her tonight she should have one very soon. She's really peeved about it. Can't say I blame her. I wouldn't like to hear about you, through Jane's letters from Benny. I do and love it, but I hear from you at least once a week now.

I've been writing for hours. Jane has been asleep for some time. It's good for her cold, she's really had a terrific one. The trip to the zoo didn't help any. She feels better tonight, however.

We heard about Andy and sticking his neck out. Don't you feel envious? I know I would have. You make me feel so good talking about making up the VE day supplement. Sounds like music.

I'm sorry Carl hasn't worked out. Bill said you and he were living together. Somehow, I can't picture that. Has he told you about Eve? He told everyone else all the gory details. What a guy. I know how you would feel not being able to have the paper be a good one. I'm glad you aren't satisfied with just anything. I guess you are a perfectionist, hon, at least in your work.

Bud would enjoy doing a history on the Ninth. Wonder what happened to the Pacific deal? We heard that both Bud and Andy had been called to Paris, so since we know Solbert knows about the movie deal, we figure it must be because of that. I wish I'd hear from you to know what you think about it.

Bette won't have any difficulty getting married if she wants to. She once told me she didn't think she'd like the responsibility of marriage. Perhaps she's changed her mind. She's quite the glamour-girl now.

I'm afraid Jane and I do worry but we're really the *Stars and Stripes* auxiliary now. When anything goes wrong they call us almost first, but that's good. I want to be informed.

I like your nerve, Mr. K., un-censoring my mail. If I'd wanted you to know that, I wouldn't have crossed it out. Golly, I can't remember what it was now, so I can't blush. What method do you use? When you cross things out I don't try and read underneath. I don't think it's very nice of you, Mr. K. I think I'll pout a bit on that one.

I could say I'm tired of being a good girl, but I'll go on being good just to please you. Well, that keeps you smiling. I try to smile but I can't very often. I need you to make me laugh, and you did. I wish I could tell you how happy I was those three and a half months. I'm happy now, happy that I'm Mrs. K. but it isn't the kind of happiness I have being with you. Remember the night the clothesline fell down and you scolded me because I hung too many things on the line... and you wrung more water out of them? I felt like a poor excuse for a wife, but all the time I was sort of laughing inside. You were so intent and fussy, and I love it... even being scolded. I'm probably in for a lot of that but I won't mind.

I'm getting writer's cramp, darling, from being at this so long. Have you heard enough of me for one night? Would you like to go to bed? I haven't showered yet and you're probably all ready, or do you still have to get ready? I just thought of something.. you must have to take your shoes off now before you take off your trousers because they couldn't possibly come off over those paraboos. Let me know about that. Maybe that's why it takes you so long at night to go to bed. That would be quite a task doing it the hard way. I'm ducking, for there's probably a boot coming my way. I love to tease you, even by mail. This way I do get away with it a little better. A nice big gloppy goodnight kiss. Can I come over to your house? It's getting warmer now, hon, and I have no good excuse. What do I do now? I love you so much. I miss you even more.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

March 21, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

I've been able to keep my promise to come back and be with you tonight. And, I know it is the first time in weeks that I've been with you two nights in succession.

Your letter of Mar. 15 arrived today in the envelope from New York and there a few things about it that I wanted to talk with you about.

I haven't heard a single word, officially or unofficially about this MGM deal. Personally, I think it's a lot of bunk and I wish you wouldn't get enthused about it.

I asked Bud if he knew anything about it, and if he did, he kept his silence. He did say, "it would be great if Andy, Benny, Bob, you and I got home on it." But, he didn't mention anything being done about it. If I had super-human eyesight I couldn't see the five of us being released for something like that. One, or two, men is a possibility but five! At a time when there is a considerable shortage of manpower.

Besides, Bud would probably have the final say on who would go and I'm sure my name would not top the list.

I don't want to be a pessimist, but I don't believe you should get excited about it. I have absolutely no connection with any book that is being written for a potential film. As I understand, Bud and Andy were going to do it. That's why I have no idea what you meant by a contract for "a book." However, if Slesinger just wants my name on a piece of paper to be assured of something that might happen, like writing a book, he can have it. I'm trying to get a form on legal power of attorney and will mail it as soon as possible.

Perhaps I'm confused on the whole thing. You said a letter was on the way, explaining it all. When it comes, I'll be able to have a better picture of it all.

Another thing, hon, anything Benny says is usually exaggerated ten-fold. So, please don't consider his letters as indications of what's going on. He is not a one-man newspaper, despite anything he says. That's just Benny's way of feeling he is indispensable. He wouldn't be happy otherwise.

Two weeks ago, Leo David, who took over the desk in Paris from Bob, was "no good" and all kinds of assorted things Benny could think of. Now, after David put Benny on the desk while he is on a four-day trip, David isn't "such a bad guy after all."

That's what I mean.

Joe seems to belong to the S&S auxiliary, according to your reports of dinner, staying over, etc. He is a rather lonely sort, though, and I'm sure he welcomes your company.

The pictures of Annice were adorable, if I may use such a word. They showed her in those facial expressions I best remember her. I see you are still wearing that coat. I hope you see fit to get a new spring coat with the \$100 I'm enclosing.

And now, that time has come for lovers to part and say goodnight.

Look beautiful for those three kisses...

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

March 23, 1945—New York

My darling,

No letter today, but thought I'd talk with you a bit. Marg is in for the night. We talked Joe into spending some time with his family so we're all being very domestic. Marg brought her laundry over and is doing a little ironing now. I cut a dress out and have it half put together. Jane has been buzzing around doing various things.

You would have laughed at me on my knees cutting this darn dress out on the floor. Probably very good for the hipline, however.

Let me tell you about my job... so far so good. I'm going to like it very much. As I told you, I think, it's being a clerk and typist to the auditors who are doing the books of four companies all owned by Standard Oil. They are in an eight-story building around the corner. I have a desk in an office with the two head auditors... both very nice: a Mr. Walton, the head who was in the A.E.F. World War I and part of the Army of Occupation for a year. I think he's about 54 or 55. The other auditor in the office is quite a character. His name is Mr. Tweddle, no kidding, and veddy, veddy English. He was the foreign representative for Standard Oil in Europe for many years before the war. His humor is very dry of course. He never misses an opportunity to rub it in about my name being Irish. He hasn't much use for women in business... thinks they should be at home where they belong. He's nice underneath it all. We've had some very interesting conversations. Mr. Tweddle, by the way, is sixtyish. It's so much better than the Time job. Almost I feel like a new woman. The people and surroundings are so much nicer... no foreign element at all. They all look like honest to gosh Americans. The hours are super: 9-4:45 and no Saturdays. It's almost unbelievable. I feel guilty almost. Too bad I couldn't have found something like this when you were here. No, I had to take the first job that was offered.

Joe and Marg were to dinner last night and we played 21 after. I lost twenty cents. Marg cleaned us all. Joe kept saying something about you not liking to be asked to play casino and also not liking to "Remember Pearl Harbor." It was a good evening, except I missed you horribly, as usual. I kept remembering those Heart games we used to play... how amused you'd get at me. I couldn't remember how to play the darn game. Brief me, darling.

El called me tonight and everyone is fine there. She and the baby are going to Long Island for the weekend. She told me that Ray Roche has written a follow-up on the "Father Chuck" story (enclosed at long last) [this story has not been found] telling how proud Jersey City is of the Kiley boys, etc. She said she'd give it to me when I came over. They have every reason to be proud, I'd say, but then I'm only your wife.

I've been looking for an Easter card for you but haven't been able to find one I liked, so I'll resort to a cable, if you won't mind. The little bunny will be a sort of greeting.

I just happened to think, it's exactly four months today that we saw each other. It seems like four years.

We're all gathered around the table drinking coffee. It's about twelve. We're talking about birthdays, etc. and how they aren't any fun to celebrate alone. It's been a beautiful spring day after all the rain we've had this week. It would have been a good night for a walk.

We're due to go to a party tomorrow night to wish Joe a bon voyage. Bill Spear and his wife are borrowing the Mazo's apartment while they are in Washington, and we're to go there. I'm going to miss you again, I know. I hate going out like that without you.

I've rattled on without telling you much. Jane's letters from Benny today were a little informative. We're so happy to hear the battle is over and the smoke cleared away. I hope I have a letter from you tomorrow.

Marg is going to enclose this in the packet. I still have a shower to take and I may wash my hair, so I'll look like Mrs. K. tomorrow night. Tuck me in nice in a little bit. What with pins and all in my hair I wouldn't be good company in your house tonight. I love you, darling, oh, so much.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

March 24, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

This is one of those "quickies," the kind I don't like to write to you, because it gives me such a little time to gaze into those so beautiful eyes (yes, they are beautiful, too).

But, the mail is outgoing in a few minutes and I want to get these off to you. Incidentally, this is the stationery Eleanor Scott sent to me.

The power of attorney is enclosed, as well as the check for \$50, which a Ruth Galaid of The Times wrung out of March of Time. The letter, represented by a Frank Norris, sent the check with the notation that MOT was not obligated to pay me for using the story inasmuch as the Associated Press used it as a news story, thereby making it public property three days after it was published. If it had only been in the Time magazine section it would have been different. But, if you remember, Hal Boyle of the AP did a re-hash of it, quoting my notes, after the Times used it. In any case, this \$50 brings to total made on the story up to \$375, which isn't so bad for about two days of research and 30 minutes of writing.

Too, I suddenly thought I should be proud of myself. Since I've been back I've been able to contribute \$500 to the Kileys' kitty. That would include the two \$100 money orders, \$50 each from True Magazine and MOT and the \$200 from Slesinger.

Perhaps, by now you will have heard that Slesinger got a lot of people excited for nothing. Andy tells me IF the deal goes through on the picture that only two men will go home... he and Bud, which was what I figured to be the case all the time. I don't blame you, if you did get enthused. Slesinger never should have included me in the deal. I believe if Bud had to pick two others it would be Bob and Benny. That's how it is.

As of today, I'm finished with sports here. Paul Horowitz came up from Paris to take that worry away from me. Now, I move into the "slot." Between the two of us, when and if Larsen steps down I think I'll take over the paper. I hesitated to take it twice before, but the staff has shaped up 100% better in the last couple of weeks, and now I believe I'll be able to do something with it. Meanwhile, I'll be chief of the copy desk, handle four correspondents in the field and continue to do the organizing that Larsen isn't temperamentally capable of doing.

See you tonight, beautiful.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

March 26, 1945—New York

My darling

First time I've been around for a few days... Friday, in fact. I'll have to bring you up to date as to my activities.

Now I have a Saturday off. Got up at nine-thirty (Jane had to work half a day) and cleaned the apartment. I made it to the bank before twelve to get a check cashed... didn't get paid this week yet. Stopped at the jewelers and picked up your watch, repaired this time. Went by Time, Inc. to find out about back money I had coming to me. Bought a few Easter cards, then got shoved along Fifth Avenue with the crowds. Picked up a few odds and ends along the way. I was home by two. Jane wasn't in yet so I went around the corner to the radio store and picked up the radio after leaving seven dollars with the man. He said it needed a new power tube and the condenser was blacked... whatever that was. Then, what did I do? Oh... the dry cleaners. I had a few things there. Since Jane had her dress ruined at the one we used to go to, I've been taking them to the little man downstairs. He does a lot better work than before.

Speaking of the little dry cleaner man, I can't remember whether I told you this or not, that his wife made fudge for you and Benny. Your box of candy is enclosed in the box I packed last week. I hope it's still good when you get it. Can you imagine? He called us early one Saturday morning and told us he had two boxes for us downstairs for our husbands. His wife is a nice old lady. You'll probably want to send them a note. Their name is Mr. & Mrs. Sam Plotkin, probably c/o Tower Cleaners with this address would reach them all right. He always asks me about you and Benny when we go in.

Back to Saturday... Jane came in about three and Joe wandered in about four. We were all to go to Bill Spears for a sendoff party for Joe and Hodenfield. Marg came in about six and we all went out to dinner to a new place, Armenian on East 27th St. We had something called Shish Kebob that was very good. Even Joe liked it.

We were the first to arrive at Bill's. Soon after Bob Wood and wife, Hod and girlfriend, Herbie Schneider and Bucknell made their entrance in a body, all with a nice glow on. Bob Wood and Herbie Schneider I met for the first time. This is supposed to amuse you... never having met Bob before, I couldn't really appreciate his actions. He jitterbugged, did a striptease for us, after a fashion, which amounted to unbuttoning his shirt (not nearly as good as yours) and was the life of the party. I thought Joe would die from hysteria he laughed so much. Bill's wife is very nice. I enjoyed meeting her. Everyone was feeling very good before the evening was over. Marg danced with Bob. Neither of them knew how to jitterbug but the attempt was a riot. We all had fun. Mrs. K. behaved herself like a lady. I had three rye and sodas very early in the evening and no more. Just didn't want any more. I think a good time was had by all. We left around three o'clock, I guess. Bucknell was quite stiff, more than I've ever seen him... veddy British, too, of course. We all piled into a cab and went downtown, stopping at the respective stops. We left Buck in the cab at 5L and he made his way from there.

Marg stayed with us. We sat around 'til nearly five drinking coffee and discussing the party.

I got up in time to make the last Mass around the corner. Left both Jane and Marg sleeping soundly. I awakened them when I came back, however. It was such a gorgeous day. We had a big breakfast... we all ate two eggs each. After getting cleaned up and dressed and had a look at the papers, we decided to go for a ferry boat ride to Staten Island. The sky was so clear and blue, darling, really a perfect day. We came home about six, cooked dinner for us and then went to a movie... never a dull moment.

I really went to work today. The typewriter came late Friday, a noiseless Remington. I hate those things. The touch is awful on them but I'm getting used to it now. The men I work for have only been with the company a mere twenty years.

They had a big meeting today revising the shift plan they have in effect now. Pop has probably told you about that plan of annuity they have... really swell. Fine for those who expect to stay and grow with the company. It's really a swell organization. I could see more of them at the meeting.

I had a letter from Warren. He's trying very hard to get back on flying status. He wants to get back in action now. Seems a shame he can't make the best of a good deal, but then perhaps I'd feel the same way. I wouldn't like the idea of not being in it. If he succeeds, it will undoubtedly mean the Pacific.

We received word today that Les David had been sent to Liege and Benny is acting manager. I'm glad to hear Benny is back in their good graces anyway. It's only to be temporary, I guess to see how it works out.

Earl and Rita have gone to Charleston again. He was to do a story in Washington, to be there several weeks. He called Joe from Charleston and said they gave him the run around the first day at the Pentagon so he decided to go home. It's a great life, isn't it? More power to him for getting away with it. He's really been on an extended leave. Joe calls him some unprintable name for taking advantage of a good thing. Nobody can please, I guess because already they are resenting Bill for being so serious and businesslike. Morrow has gone to the spring training camps for a few weeks. He's covering sports now. I sure hope he stays on the wagon.

Marg still hasn't received any mail from Andy. She's beginning to think he isn't mailing them or something. She told Joe she guessed she'd write to him instead of Andy... only kidding, of course. I'm glad you aren't like that, Mr. K. Just don't know what I'd do.

Jane and I went for a walk tonight after supper, it was so nice out. We saw so many funny little shops over off Sixth Avenue and the Village square. We saw a cradle... very old fashioned, one of those on a frame. It has a little inscription on the side, "Made by..." whoever made it. It was made for some



royalty. The little man in the store asked \$250.00 for it. It's a museum piece, I suppose, but it was so quaint. I liked it. He rents it until he can find a buyer, for three months at a time for \$4.00 a month. We found what appeared to be a couple of good restaurants, one a seafood place.

Jane's in bed now. Since she had the cold she tires quickly so the rest will do her good. She's going to Albany with Marg. Like me, she dreads Easter. Going to Albany will be better for her than 195. I want to be there Easter. I'm going to an early Mass at St. Al's so I can be with you.

I packed a box for Mom tonight... candy and stockings. I'll send a check to Elise for flowers for her. It won't be a good day for her, either. But, at least she'll know we're thinking of her.

As far as we know, Joe is wending his way toward England or France. We're almost sure they left today. He's wearing your watch back. I hope it's still in good working order.

I had your robe cleaned and those slacks you left behind. Maybe you'll be wearing them soon. Do you think if you remain in France you'll ever wear summer uniforms or doesn't it get that warm? The news still continues to be almost unbelievable. Already the rumor-mongers are out. It can't come too soon for me, but then what?

I've rattled on at a great rate, darling, when all I feel like doing is curling up in your lap and chewing on your ear, and having you scold me. Bill said you have all my letters in a bag in your room. How you'll be weighed down carrying them home.

I imagine there are still a few more to come. I have all yours, but there's room here. Sometime in front of our own fireplace we can read to each other. They are all such wonderful letters. I'm so glad we're us, darling. I wouldn't trade places with anyone.

I'm a bit sleepy, darling. I've been here an hour now and it's nearly twelve. I'm all ready to be tucked in. I hope and pray that day isn't too far away when I can say my prayers across from you instead of Jane. I love you so. I'm realizing it more and more each day what being married to you, Mr. K., means. It's really so wonderful, so very wonderful. Be careful, and keep well. Goodnight, my dearest.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

March 27, 1945—Liege

Evening angel,

I get terribly angry with myself when I realize I have slipped into a hollow and simply can't lift myself out of it. For example, I repeatedly and firmly told myself that I will not only feel and appreciate my love for you; that I will not only declare my love for you, but that I will do something about it and better display my feelings by writing more often.

I ask myself, can it be possible that I just can't write at least once a day? Surely, an hour isn't too much to look for. But, somehow, sweetheart, that hour can't be found. So, when you do receive a better display of my adoration for you, you will know I have found a way to get out of that "hollow."

I received three of your letters today, those ever so welcome bits of sky blue, and I just know they are going to keep me here with you for awhile tonight. The letters were those of Mar. 7, 11, and 17.

I think we had better finish off the MGM business first, shall we? Somehow, I feel I got a bit temperamental a few nights ago when I asked you not to get enthusiastic about any "dream." Now, I can realize, and I should have from the outset, that it was natural for you to get enthused. I know I would get terribly agitated if there was a remote possibility of me seeing you soon. Still, Slesinger should never have brought me into the picture, and I blame him, screwball that he must be.

As I said last week, if Bud and Andy gave Slesinger my name as a third man, I wasn't aware of it. Moreover, I'm sure Slesinger included me on his own, although I don't know why. If it was just Andy, it may have been so. But, Hutton isn't that kind, and I know, or at least feel reasonably certain, that he and Andy were to work on the deal alone. At any rate, the very next time I see Andy, I'll ask him for the complete story, if there is any more to it.

Meanwhile, just forget about me having any connection with it whatsoever. Too, you can exclude Bob and Benny. They are just as far removed from it as I am. Anything that Slesinger wants, like asking you to have me send ten more names, he can easily get from Hutton. The more I think of it all, the more I feel that Slesinger was being a "character" in mentioning my name only because he was talking with you. If it were Jane, he probably would have included Benny.

So much for MGM.

You must know by now that Bud jumped with the paratroopers across the Rhine the other day. He came up with a good story, too.

I don't like to hear of you being home with a cold, sweetheart. I don't mean "hearing" of it, but the fact that you were ill. Please take good care of yourself, huh?

Your letters were puzzling until I re-read them to find out if you were or were not working.

First, you said you had quit Time to take a job with Hattie Carnegie. Then that didn't materialize and it was a bank. Now you talk of an employment agency.

While you don't say it, hon, I somehow feel you are awfully mixed up. Are you? I mean about the picture deal and now looking for work. I do wish I was able to be with you, and tell you it was all over and that you didn't have to worry for another second.

The news of Mom being ill and having doctors was a bit of a shock, hon, even if I did wait until way down here to say it. You hadn't said anything about it before, but I suppose you didn't know of it until recently. I'll write to her tonight when I've kissed you 'bye for awhile.

If the \$50 you sent was not enough, send more. Since you aren't working, you might need the money, too. But, if you see your way clear, send all you can, even to the extent of cashing in some bonds. Every penny we have is in your hands to do what you will with it. And, you don't have to wait for an answer from me before using it where it will do the most good. As it is, I only wish I could send more to you.

I'm sending a note to our administration officer in Paris to ask him to check on the missing November bond. All I can do is have him check and hope for the best.

Now, Mrs. K., I'm afraid I'm going to be a little... well, a little like a jealous, blind and prudish husband. This, I know will not make you feel as though I'm understanding. In saying what I will, I fully realize both you and Jane were being thoughtful, hospitable, etc., and doing what Benny and I might want you to do. Perhaps, I shouldn't come out with it now since it probably won't happen again. But, well, I just don't want to keep it to myself. The fact that Hodenfield stayed overnight in the apartment did it!

Despite the fact that Joe stayed a few times, I didn't say anything because I figured it would be the last time. It's just that I don't think it's right, hon. Moreover, there are about 15,000 hotels in New York and if Joe didn't want to go home, I'm sure he could have found a room in one of them. About Hodenfield, I'd just as leave not talk about that. If you were living in a spacious place with guest rooms, it would be different. But, gosh...

Seriously, sweetheart, I'm ... well, somehow I know it just takes an "I'm sorry" to inform people they can't squeeze three people in a telephone booth, especially when you have to sleep in it. Do you think I'm wrong in this? If I am, then I'm willing to be convinced.

Aside from the fact it happened, I would rather not have Joe, and Hodenfield, or anybody else but Warren, or maybe someone like Benny's brother, say to me, "I stayed with Billee and Jane." I know it would be all right and I couldn't care less what people thought, but was it conventional, sweetheart?

Personally, I wouldn't think of doing it myself and for the life of me I can't see anyone else doing it... dead drunk or sober. I'd kick Hodenfield out in the street first, and I believe I'm as charitable as anyone else.

And that concludes my sermon for the day. Please, don't get upset about it. It's all over and your daddy loves you more than ever. But, he was displeased.

Maybe, it's the beautiful spring weather we have been having and I'm getting awfully lonesome for you, but it's leaving me in a critical mood, too.

I don't like you getting high when I'm not with you, even if you do act like a lady. And, if all the returning *Stars and Stripes* bureau celebrated, I'd like to think you stopped celebrating when the little man in the glass said, "Stop!" Okay? If I'm being unreasonable, I'm ready to be told off, knowing full well that you've been "high" about twice since your man up and left you.

I'm terribly jealous and unreasonable where you are concerned. And, if I'm too much that way, it's because I want you to be so much better than anybody else in the world, and because I love you so very, very much. It's hard, I know, to shut yourself up and not be enjoying everything. I don't want it to be like that way ever. But that damned Hodenfield incident is just giving me an awful ache... maybe making everything else distorted.

You don't love me less for sounding off, do you? If there is anything that I'm doing I'd be disappointed if you didn't do the same thing.

Will you scold me, too?

A couple of weeks ago I asked you to let me know how our financial status was. But, in the light of your last couple of letters I guess it won't be so good, and it won't be necessary for you to start adding figures. When we're rich, I'll ask again. Never like to get a bad report.

I like to get ones like your reaction to our "three kisses." Honestly, I didn't mean to make you cry, darling, but as long as they were tears of joy it's all right. You remember I never wanted you to cry but when you wept on our wedding day, "because you couldn't hold it in any longer," and again before I left... well, I didn't mind then. In fact, I loved you more for it.

And now, we have kept our long date, haven't we? I was ever so glad to be able to stay, Mrs. K. But, I do hope you understand how I don't want to have anyone within a mile of you at any time. I just want to put you way up high on a cloud and know that only I can look at you. It's selfish, isn't it? But, that's the kind of guy you married. Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

PS: I love my new bunny. Take her to bed with me. Her name is "Silky."

March 28, 1945—New York

Darling,

Two wonderful letters arrived yesterday and today. Super wonderful hearing from you. Funny how much a few lines of writing on paper can become so necessary.

They were so newsy, hon. I'd love the New York bureau idea if they decided to let all the old *Stars and Stripes* men run it. That's almost too good to be true.

Word came this morning that Benny and Moora have gone to Frankfurt to start an edition there or look the situation over. They are still fighting in Frankfurt as of tonight. Joe also arrived in Paris this morning. He was sure he'd spend a few days there, and Hod had gifts to distribute among his harem there so I know he'll be disappointed.

Mazo is still in South Carolina, Morrow at the baseball camp and Bucknell leaves some time to cover the election of a discharged GI for mayor in Michigan.

Marg still has received no mail from Andy. She's afraid now that it's being tampered with, that perhaps someone found out about the movie deal and is trying to gather all the information. A reassuring message from Andy has stopped her from being angry with him. She's only worried now.

Darling, I know you're probably scolding me for using last names but they all talk of them in that manner and I get accustomed to doing it, too... not to their faces, however.

Marg says the movie deal seems to be progressing all right, but, don't worry, I'm not getting excited. I'd much rather have you come home for the New York *Stars and Stripes* bureau. I'm not being choosy, however, just any way at all.

I've thought a few times how lovely it would be to have you surprise me some night by being here when I came in. You could probably talk them into letting you in the apartment. Making pipe dreams again, but I can't help it.

The rumor mongers are still running wild. Jane may be alerted over the weekend... she's not sure yet. The news is almost unbelievable... sounds more like the Russian campaign. It's sure hard not to get optimistic but I am trying not to be, too much.

Marg was down for dinner then we all went for a walk, down to Washington Square and up Fifth Avenue a ways. We stopped in the drug store above the Grosvenor where we used to get snacks and had very wonderful cold fudge sundaes... very fattening, I know. We ambled over to a book store across the street and browsed around for quite awhile. The night is simply wonderful.. full moon and very balmy.

Hon, I'm really not a wanderlust person. No one is going to be more settled than I when you come home. You'll have to force me out. If we have a fireplace, that will really clinch the deal of staying home. It's just that not having you around makes me restless.

The Turkish bath is right out of this world. I can just see you flitting around modestly in the trunks. I remember how cute you looked when we all went swimming and how you were always losing your trunks. I'm glad, though, that you are washing your own back... besides, that's my job. Probably not as well as they since they're probably professional back-washers, but anyway it's more fun. You're pretty good at it yourself, you know. It's good, too, that you have a place where you can swim.

It's perfectly all right for Andy to use the gloves. It was probably silly of me to buy them when the winter was nearly over. Oh, well, we can use them around here next winter. Maybe we'll be able to go sleighing at Bear Mountain, or skiing. Is that being too optimistic? At any rate, you will be able to use them.

I'm sorry, darling, but I didn't buy a coat. All the ones I thought you might like were out of this world as far as price goes. I just couldn't see paying that much and didn't have it to begin with. So spring is here and I'm not going to worry about a winter coat now. You're probably going to scold me.

I must close, hon. It's late and I'm going to Mass in the morning. I'm ready to be tucked in. I'd love to be tucked in by you. No one else, just you. I want to be kissed more than three times... nice, gloppy ones. I love you so much, so very much. Be good and love me lots.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Billee

March 30, 1945—Jersey City

My darling,

Just a goodnight note before I trundle upstairs. I'm at 195 for the weekend.

There's a super gorgeous moon out and it's very balmy out. I was warm in my suit, the gold one.

Marguerite stayed with us last night. She asked to be remembered to you. She's quite well. I met her this evening and had dinner at the Savarin. Reminded me of my goings and coming to New York when I was in Matawan and Asheville. I always ate in there.

El is busy writing to Tom... received quite a batch from him this week. Bette is on the other side of the table leafing through some magazines I brought over. Pop is beside the radio... he just awakened. I forgot to mention, Bette looks very glamorous with an upswept hairdo.

Marge and I stopped in St. Francis for a little while. They were having three-hour service. The place was mobbed. We couldn't get any further than the door.

I kept remembering three years ago today. I was so happy and excited on my way to be with you... not dreaming that the next night would find me officially engaged. That was really a surprise in a way. I thought perhaps you'd write it to me or something. It's wonderful the way you did it, though... couldn't have asked for a nicer proposal. Some day, just for fun, I'm going to have you do it all over again, on your knees, the proper way. We were so deliciously happy that night. That was the night I boarded that pink cloud with you... been there ever since. There have been times when it gets a little pale in color, when I miss you like tonight, but you'll make it pink again.



St. Francis church on West 31st Street, a Gothic Revival structure completed in 1896, known for its mosaic art. The mosaic behind the altar is one of the largest in the U.S.

I missed you so coming over on the bus... wanted you to be reading your paper with my hand tucked in your where it belongs.

I just learned Pop will be 60 tomorrow. I'll bake him a cake and find him something tomorrow. I didn't realize he was that old... not really old, but I thought he was a few years younger.

I bought Annice an adorable yellow bonnet. It looked like Easter so I couldn't resist it.

Reports just came over that women and girls [in Germany] are fighting Patton with bazookas.

In this week's Life is a picture of the cemetery at Henri-Chappelle. I'll save it.

Our beautiful weather is to be over in a few days if the weather man is right. I hope it holds out for the weekend anyway.

Mrs. K. bought a dress tonight. Very simple and conservative, but everything I have is wool. I needed something to wear these warm days. We'll probably have a frost now. I wanted a silly hat,

hon, but I couldn't find one. If I can get down early enough, I'll stop in and see Ray for a few minutes in the morning.

Golly, hon, it's late again. I wish we could be climbing the stairs together... going to bed together and have you really tuck me in and kiss me three times. I'd like to mess your hair up and bite your ear... your chin, too. You have such a nice chin. I'm so glad you shave before you go to bed, too. I'd better say goodnight. I love you so much, so very much. Be careful and be good (I hope your back isn't getting washed). Miss me and love me lots.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, your sweetheart

March 30, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

There isn't much for us to talk about tonight. That is, not like the other night when I wrote the 13-page book. But, I could sit here for hours, look at you wrinkle your nose and just talk about us.

I'm writing in my room tonight where I can see you sitting beside me on our wedding day, on the tree trunk in Asheville, in North Arlington with the baby between us. I can also look the other way and see my other sweetheart... Billee Gray. Gosh, she was a beautiful girl, but not as much as Mrs. Kiley. Billee Gray had something missing in her face... something that Mrs. Kiley has.

I had a letter from Mrs. K. today. It came in the envelope from New York and was only seven days old. It cleared up the mystery of your job, for which I was thankful. You didn't tell me anything about the salary, though, so I could figure out how many banks I'll have to hold up to give you everything I want you to have.

Joe arrived in Paris the other day and immediately asked to come to Liege. I spoke with him on the phone and started working from this end to get him up here. However, we may have to wait a bit until Paris gets more men. Benny, Bob, et al., are still in the Frankfurt area and I still don't know whether they will remain there or return to Paris. One of the fellows came up from Paris today with a report that the Frankfurt deal is ice cold.

I had thought they were going to turn out a regular paper but it now develops it was only going to be a two-page affair turned out on a mobile press. The latest word is that Paris decided to call it off. Meanwhile, the boys are in the Frankfurt area and will probably return to Paris.

Joe said he has my watch and I'll get it from him as soon as possible.

I received a package from Earl and Rita today; also a letter from Earl and the pictures he took. I'm enclosing them for our scrapbook.

There was a letter from Lee, just a few lines but I appreciate them so much.

Do you think you can do a little shopping for Daddy, and buy him a half dozen t-shirts and two tan shirts? The t-shirts are the quarter-sleeve, light undershirts. I believe Marg Rooney knows what they are if you don't. If we can afford it, I'd like a couple of good tan shirts, not the \$12 dollar variety! A

five or six dollar limit is plenty. You might send the t-shirts one at a time in the New York envelope if it's okay with Marg and Bill Spear. Just tell Bill it's an order from me.

And now, angel, pull in your wings, kiss me three times and I'll tuck you in. Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

March 31, 1945—Jersey City

Darling,

It's another Saturday night to check off our list. One more that we have to be together via and pen and paper. Do you mind if I resign from letter writing for about a year after you come home? I'm not complaining about writing to you. It's just that I don't exactly like having to be with you this way. I can think of so many other ways.

I baked Pop a luscious cake. He seemed to like it since he ate two pieces. He opened all his presents. We gave him a belt and buckle with his initial... pretty nice. El and I went up this morning to the square. Something awakened us at a very bright, early hour. Right now I feel as if I'd never slept.

Mrs. K. made herself a silly hat tonight out of white gardenias and veiling. All she has to do now is have nerve enough to wear it. Also, I made myself a new bag... very simple and it turned out rather well. The most ordinary kind of bag is something out of this world. El likes my hat and says by all means I should wear it.

Father John is due in for dinner tomorrow. We have two reels of film and the weather man promises good weather for us so perhaps you will get some Easter pictures.

El got two letters from Tom. I suppose just because I wasn't home I have some. It'll be a nice surprise to go to when I return tomorrow.

We had quite a day with the kids. Terry and one of the girls that are here from Long Island. Annice is going to be a tomboy I think, but a very nice one. She is so darling. I hope ours turn out as well. Being here today with the kids, serving and being very domestic made me realize more than ever that I belong in a home and not an office.

Pop is getting ready to turn in. He's probably been asleep while we were out. El and I took in a movie... rather good, too: "Bring on the Girls." Light and musical. You might enjoy it.

I stopped in to see Ray, but he wasn't in. I nearly got thrown out. An elderly woman was at the desk in the outer office so knowing my way around I waltzed toward Ray's office. She was busy phoning. I was stopped cold by this



voice bellowing behind wanting to know where I was going. She scolded me for walking right in, etc. All this time she was talking on the phone, too. Realizing Ray wasn't in, I made a hurried departure. She probably wondered who I thought I was.

I went to Confession this afternoon at St. Al's. Had to wait awhile of course. I couldn't help remembering our day there. How frightened I was until you wrinkled your nose at me. Seems like yesterday. I'm so glad I'm Mrs. K. Honest and truly. I love you so very much. Now I'm going to let you tuck me in because I'm a tired little bunny and I mean tired. My Communion will be for us in the morning. Perhaps it's selfish but I can't help it. Keep well, my darling, and love me.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee