

Chapter 10

April—June 1945

April 1, 1945—New York

My dearest darling,

This is ten times worse than the Christmas holidays. I was all right until I got home. Jane hasn't arrived yet from Albany but your letter of March 20th was waiting for me to say Happy Easter, then I had to cry...buckets. Is it good or not... feeling sorry for myself but I missed you so? To want such simple things and not be able to have them.

The kids awakened us early. El and I went to 8:00 Mass... that one was mobbed so I can imagine what the later ones were like. I missed you then, of course. I wanted you to be kneeling beside me. I wondered where you had received. It was earlier than the Mass I went to by four or five hours. El and I went for a walk before dinner with the baby and Terry in the park and took a few pictures. Father John came in for dinner about 1:00. We all went to the cemetery after, except Pop, and stopped in the park on the way home. Father John had about 25 feet in his camera, and we had another roll to take on El's camera so we should get a few snaps out of them. The day has been perfect as far as weather goes. You couldn't ask for a more beautiful Easter day.

Dot called me from the Doyle's to wish me a happy Easter so I stopped in for a little while on my way to catch the bus. Had coffee with them and that glass of Rheingold with Mary. Vinnie, Tom, Mr. Drayton [Dot's father], Ann, Bess, Dot, Mary, Mama Doyle and the babies were there. Everyone is fine. Mr. Drayton has had a little sinus trouble, but the rest are fine. Dorothy Jean is getting to be a young lady... don't know yet who she looks like.

Berta is having the babies christened next Sunday. Dot is to be a godmother of Ronald. I'll go out soon to see them. Berta hasn't been able to find a larger apartment yet.

Dot hasn't gained any weight and Al didn't gain back all he lost. He looks good but I imagine his diet keeps his weight down.

Mama Doyle is sweet... wanted to be sure I'd come back. It's hard, darling, for me to go to places like that without you. Can you understand? I know I shouldn't be envious... should be grateful there are people like Dot, Al, Marty, Bill and the rest who have their families and are together but I can't help feeling envious.

I gave Father John the Liege editions. A few more were waiting tonight along with your letter. I can see your hand in them, darling, even though there are no bylines.

The news still continues to be good. It just can't go on and on. There must be an end soon.

Now to your letter. Slesinger asked me to get the power of attorney. He let me to believe you would be signed up with Andy and Bud for the *Stars and Stripes* book as I explained earlier but I understand he signed for Andy and Bud. No more has been said to me on the matter. He's such a screwy guy. I don't know how those guys can rely on him. He has invited Jane, Marg and I to his farm in Connecticut for a weekend. Don't know that I care for the idea. If anything good comes out of the deal I'll be surprised. I understand the Marseilles edition is working on a similar deal. As far as Slesinger having first option on anything you write... that's his idea and there's nothing in writing. So that we don't have to worry about.

Al mentioned tonight that a Mort Sullivan was killed in France, the younger brother of Red. Seems you and he went to school with the latter. Al knew you'd be interested.

The only unhappiness I have, darling, is not being able to be with you. No one could ask to be happier than I've been. Our 3 1/2 months were seventh heaven to me. You're still the bestest husband in the world. Just wouldn't be any more like you.

By this time you know Hattie and I didn't get along, and that I'm commuting to the next block. Mary is still drawing her salary and working at home.

Honest, hon, you'd better keep the money. I bought bonds with the balance of the two hundred after I sent Mom the fifty so it wouldn't get away from me. I don't want to be a spoil sport, but I'll just have to take to staying at home more. I'd lots rather spend it with you.

Our cash on hand is nil, and I haven't been able to save any of the allotment checks. That isn't good. Now my salary will net \$27.50 a week, but I'll just have to get along on it, and that's all there is to it. It doesn't make a nice story, I know. I feel ashamed that you've been able to save so much and me so little. Guess I'm weak-minded where money is concerned.

Oh, darling, I think another job would be wonderful. Together maybe we could keep straight financially. Something always seems to come along and upset my budget... makes me so mad. I'll just have to close my eyes to presents, etc.

I have such a laundry to do. It's nice being here alone with you. I'm in the big chair with my legs swung over the side using my knees for a desk. I don't look very nice because I've been crying but I feel almost as if you had held me in your arms and let me cry on your shoulder now. That's good, isn't it?

Your laundry list is cute... it will go in our scrapbook material.

I'm so happy I cleaned up the apartment before I left Friday because I sure don't feel like it tonight. I feel like curling up in your arms and having you sing me a lullaby. I'd be asleep in two seconds. Instead, I'll be staring at the ceiling... remembering.

It's almost three years ago today that I met the Kileys for the first time. Remember how frightened I was... and I was, really. My knees were shaking that day. I wanted them to like me. Then, Dot and Al, Bill Daly and it seemed like countless numbers of others viewed me that day and passed their

approval. Honestly, hon, it was one of the most difficult days of my short life, but one of the happiest because I was with you and the people that knew you and loved you.

Al mentioned tonight, too, which I remember, that Bill Daly is a little hurt that you haven't written to him since you're back. Al told him about the long hours you work and how little spare time you have.

Would you like to wait a little while until I finish the laundry I have soaking and take a shower, then you may tuck me in nice.

I'm back... all nice and clean. My laundry's all hanging in the bathroom. I'm sleepy now. Bless you, my darling, and hurry home. Your letter was the bestest Easter present ever. I love you.

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

April 1, 1945—Liege

Billee dearest,

This has been one of the loneliest days without you. It started early during Mass, when it was difficult to keep my mind on anything but thoughts of you. It was Easter, and I knew we should be together. It is always like that. But more so on days like this.

So, when I went to Communion at St. Denis' this morning I prayed fervently that God would always keep us as close together as we are now and have been these last 1,171 days. I asked Him to watch over you, to protect you and guide you, to make the burden of our separation as light as possible.

After Mass it was just another day. They are all "other days" when there is plenty of work and not much time to think. But just now, when the day is over, and there is time to think... well, tomorrow it won't be so bad again.

I really don't know how to tell you how much I miss you, sweetheart. Not anymore. And, it is a terrible confession to make. I know how much I love you... how much I want you... and it hurts terribly at times. Just as it does on days like this. I want to tell you all these things better than I am now, but the only way I can do it is to say... I love you, truly.



The Church of St. Denis in Liège, Belgium, is a former fortified collegiate church, founded in 987. The church has since 1936 been registered as a listed building, and is currently listed as "exceptional heritage" of the Wallonia area of Belgium.

Your Easter present to me... aside from the bunny.... was the letter of March 22 which came today. And, if you will permit me, my dear, I have a few things to say in defense of what Bill Spear told you.

1. I am not getting heavy. In fact, I've lost seven pounds since I took leave of your cooking.
2. The time it takes me to go to bed depends on who I am sleeping with. Now, smarty, are you glad you mentioned that?
3. I have been to the "Clip-Clop" just six times; three before we came to Liege for good and thrice since. Inasmuch as I'm in the office from 1 p.m. until 2 a.m., I fail to see where I have time to visit bars.
4. My "French" is just good enough to make myself understood. About as much as a foreigner who would say, "I no want done," or "Me say it not necessary," or "Have you it," or "Voulez vois couchez avec moi c'est soir?" (That's one for you to figure out.)

This is brief, angel. I'll be back.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

April 3, 1945—New York

Hello darling,

Thought I'd drop in for a bit. I wrote you a letter this afternoon and leftt in my drawer at the office. Had a little time today with nothing to do.

Yesterday and today are still so pretty. It's unbelievable, this weather is.

I was supposed to go to the Blood Bank last night. After going all through the red tape, etc., I was rejected. Hemoglobin was too low again. I guess it takes a little longer for me to build up that pint again. I feel like a 4F again, but next time I'll be OK.

Jane had to work last night and again tonight. The little girl that helps Binks' assistant isn't of much account so Jane has been doing her work, too. Jane is very much like Benny when it comes to work, too. She likes taking on a lot. You know what I mean.

Marg came over last night and brought the letter you wrote her... a good letter, too, so informative. You could tell me more about the paper, honest, hon. I'm interested. At long last she received a letter from Andy today.

We all had dinner together tonight at a Chinese place near NBC, really good, too. We had shrimp Chow Mein... something new, for me, anyway. Marg and I went to see Bud's mother at the Roosevelt Hospital. She has been ill with an ear infection. She's a charming person. Did you ever meet her? Can't imagine Bud being her son or vice versa. I've heard quite a lot about their home. You know it's near the seminary where Father John went to school.

Today is Marg's birthday. I have a cake all baked for her and as soon as Jane comes we'll have cake and ice cream. Marg is staying with us tonight. While we were in the vicinity of her hotel, we

picked up some of her laundry to do. The hotel is nice where she is... a large part of it is taken over by the Navy... fairly bristles with officers, Marine and Navy. Nice looking, too, not that I'd be interested. It's nice she has attractive atmosphere around. Suppose we could make Andy jealous so he'd write to Marg more often.

Your little booklet on Liege arrived yesterday. My French hasn't progressed that far but I can make out a little of it.

These days and nights are so wonderful... makes me miss you all the more. We've had a full moon, almost, this past week. We could be having such fun.

The news is so wonderful... keeps my tummy all excited. Jane was very mysterious tonight as if something were going to happen. Keeps me wondering... what next? I wish I knew the answers, but then maybe it's good I don't

We heard Richard Harkness [Washington correspondent for NBC] last night on the latest developments of the point system. He says it's to be more liberal, according to an inside Army source. Some two million men will be discharged... that there will be a standing army of 400,000 in the part of Germany we will occupy. In every case when it can be done those men who are to go to the Pacific will be given 30-day furloughs. Of course, darling, I'm hoping you'll be among those two million. You will let me know, good or bad, as soon as you know? It just has to be soon.

Steve Slesinger has invited Marg, Jane and I to his farm for the weekend the Connecticut. I'm not sure we're going yet. I don't know whether I can stand a whole weekend of that character. I guess it will be all right.

I had a long letter from Lee yesterday. They must be in seventh heaven. The house sounds wonderful. Young Bill is getting along wonderfully well and Harry is much better. The change has really done wonders for him. I haven't heard from Mom in quite awhile except for an Easter postcard that she was well.

I have to run downstairs for some ice cream... be back.

I'm back and guess what? I met Bette downstairs. She'd been over shopping. I wanted her to come up but she said it was too late. She came over, too, to make an appointment at the Blood Bank... her first time. She's afraid she'll get cold feet before her appointment is due. Being a veteran, I assured her there was nothing to it.

I wish Jane would hurry up... I want to go to bed.

It's better and better... we're listening to the eleven o'clock news. The Russians have captured 75,000 in three days. Golly.

I must close, darling. I wish you were here to help us wish Marg a Happy Birthday... just to be here. You'll have to wait to tuck me in since I'm not ready. Goodnight, for now, my darling. I love you so.

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

April 4, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

Tonight, I'm remembering so many things. Those moments we hold so dear and have talked of so many times. Three years ago tonight...

Darling, wherever we are when we meet again, I want you to wear your white dress. If not the gown, then one like it.

You were an angel on that Easter eve, and it is one of my favorite pictures of you. The request isn't asking too much, is it?

I have other pictures of you in my mental album, and I never tire of looking at them, sweetheart. But, the one of you and your white dress on the night of April 4 ranks high.

I'm sure the only pictures which surpass it are those of your face the night at Grove Park Inn and, of course, you drawing near as you walked up the aisle on our wedding day.

So, tonight I'm thinking back those years to our engagement night. Do you now, I don't believe I could find the shops in which I bought your bunny and orchids... I was that flustered that day.

Many things were going through my mind that day. Still, you made me so confident by just looking at you.

I'm sure I didn't plan a proposal that night, but you see I couldn't put it off any longer. You were so beautiful that night, as always.

There isn't a single moment of that memorable weekend that I don't remember clearly, from the time I opened my eyes in the barracks that morning until I kissed you at Penn Station on Easter night.

Again, I'm thinking of those things tonight, Billee dearest... and loving you more than anyone ever loved another.

I just thought I'd tell you about it... that three years is a long time to have been with each other, yet have been together so little. But, my love is stronger than ever.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

April 7, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

I know I have a date with you tonight, but I have a half hour or so to spend with you this afternoon and decided to drop over and see you wash your hair. With a date upcoming, I can picture you washing your hair in the afternoon, then sitting in the sun letting it dry out. You might be doing your nails and reading a book at the same time.

The reason for the afternoon date is to bring you up to the latest on the *Stars and Stripes* developments. Col. Goodfriend and Roessner stopped off at Liege on their way back to Paris from Frankfurt. They stopped in last night and had a long talk with us.

The Frankfurt paper (actually published in Pfungstadt, about 15 miles from Frankfurt) came out day before yesterday. Benny, Bob, Konzelman and about three others are up there. There are a lot of things to straighten out before they will be operating full-scale. Communications will take another week or so, and that's the big headache.

The plan now is for all editions to continue until Frankfurt is on its feet. Then, Liege and Nancy papers will fold with Frankfurt servicing all four armies... First, Third, Seventh and Ninth. The Frankfurt staff will have to be strengthened and about a dozen more men will go there. Larsen, Dick Jones, Art Force and myself have been tentatively scheduled to go... perhaps more from here. The rest will come from the Nancy and Paris editions. That may be in 10 days or weeks, depending on how long it takes to get Frankfurt in 100% operation.

The front is now more than 300 miles from here and Nancy. Frankfurt will be closer and more centrally located, and it sounds like the best idea from the standpoint of getting papers to the front quickly.

Goodfriend also intimated that Bob will be pulled back to Paris to work with the news service and somebody else will be managing editor, although he didn't say who. No mention was made if Benny will stay there or return to Paris. There also is a possibility that Larsen will be managing editor in Frankfurt, although that also is indefinite.

I'll be back tonight with more news... Just thought I'd like to see you this afternoon, even with a towel wrapped around your head. How's about a great big sloppy gloppy kiss?

'Bye now.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

April 7, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

This is my second letter to you today, and to give you an example of how my memory is operating these days I have already forgotten what I spoke with you about. I believe it was about the paper and if I repeat myself now it's only that I want to give you as complete a picture as I can.

The new edition at Pfungstadt (near Frankfurt) has opened with Bob, Benny, Konzelman and a few others up there. It is a four-pager and only a 15,000 press run, as compared with the 350,000 we are turning out here. It is servicing Third and Seventh Armies, while we are handling the First and the Ninth.

This is the plan, according to Goodfriend, for future operations:

Pfungstadt can turn out 1290,000 eight-page papers an hour, when operating at best, which is much more than any other edition is capable of doing. Pfungstadt is strategically located between the First and Ninth Armies to the northwest and the Third and Seventh to the northeast and east. It would be an ideal spot to service all four armies.

When Pfungstadt is operating at top speed, all mechanical and communications difficulties are straightened out, Liege and Nancy editions (the latter now serving the bulk of Third and Seventh Armies) will cease publication and Pfungstadt will take over all four armies.

The staff at Pfungstadt now is ver small. It will be enlarged by about 22 to 24 men, who will move from Liege and Nancy, mostly, to Pfungstadt.

Bob is running the new edition now, with (I suppose) Benny the number two man. Goodfriend, however, intimated that Bob would not stay there and that he would eventually return to Paris. Who he has in mind for the job I don't know. Larsen may be a candidate. A fellow named Pogasta (or something) who came up from the Mediterranean *Stars and Stripes* when we merged and became managing editor of Nancy may be another. I seriously doubt if Benny will be considered. Between you and I he is not exactly in disfavor with Goodfriend, but with Bob, will never be known as his bosom buddy. Moreover, Goodfriend has so voiced his feelings that he "often wondered why he didn't get rid of Moora and Price," but decided he would put personal feelings aside and get the most work out of them that he could. This last item came from Max Gilstrap, the captain-editor with us.

Gilstrap has proposed a "team" to Goodfriend, which he thinks will be the best for the four-army Pfungstadt paper. Larsen was listed managing editor and myself boss of the First and Ninth Army coverage. Benny was picture editor. Konselman was the slot man. Bob Wood (now in NY), Joe and others you don't know were included. I believe I'd like it... better than Paris at any rate.

The Paris, London and Nice editions will continue to function, under the new plan.

Now, there were some post VE-day plans also discussed while Goodfriend was here. And here they are:

He said MacArthur already is on record as not wanting anyone from the ETO like the *Stars and Stripes* coming to the Pacific. Apparently, if he wants a paper there he will organize it himself. However, that isn't definite. Meanwhile, for all intents and purposes, *Stars and Stripes* will remain at ETO publication without any plans for the Pacific.

When the European war is over the *Stars and Stripes* will continue to function for "maximum of a year and a minimum of eight months," according to Goodfriend, as a result of his conversation with Gen. Osborn. London edition will probably fold about three months after VE day since the Air Forces are expected to leave quickly. Nice will continue because troops will pass through there en route of the U.S. and the Pacific. Paris will continue to service troops who will be given additional training for the Pacific. The German edition, wherever located, will continue for the occupational troops as well as some of those who will remain for additional training. The New York bureau will be expanded and probably operating on the current "rotation" scheme.

I haven't any idea where I fit in after VE-day, hon, except that I'll try to get New York-wards. If not, then I believe I can have my choice of the others and it really wouldn't matter where it was.

IF the Pacific editions materialize, I'm quite certain it will be handled on a volunteer basis, supplemented by men who have been overseas the shortest lengths of time. I can say I'm positive I will not go to the Pacific, under any deal.

So, it looks like I'll just have to sweat it out in the event I can't swing the New York job, even for a few months.

These are the facts, sweetheart. I'm not pulling any punches. It's the latest news. It may change, like everything else. Benny and Andy will be in the same boat, unless that MGM deal materializes and sends Andy home. I seriously doubt if Benny will get anything he wants. From now on he'll have to do what he's told. However, chances are he will stay in the ETO, too.

I don't want you to do a lot of speculating in your mind, now. Let's be practical with both feet on the ground.

As much as I hate to say it... let's just figure your old man is going to be here for about eight or ten months after VE day, unless I can get back on the NY office rotation... and I'll sure try for that.

There are going to be a lot of people in America who will be disappointed when the men go directly to the Pacific from here. Only the real, old vets of Africa, etc. will go to the U.S., and then only after staying over here for awhile.

Looking at it from one standpoint, I'll be lucky.

Somehow, I should feel way, way down because of all this. The days will seem like months being away from you. But, I'm thinking... and maybe I shouldn't in all fairness to you and our lives, angel, about a story we got yesterday.

A soldier in the 1st Infantry Division, who had been overseas and in combat almost continuously since the invasion of Africa... Sicily... Italy... Normandy... France... the Bulge... Germany... was due to go home on a 30-day furlough. A patrol was scheduled and he was part of it. He had his choice to stay back... it wouldn't have meant much... but he went out that night. He was wounded once, could have come back, but stayed with the patrol after giving his bad arm first aid. He was wounded again, slightly in the leg, but stayed with the patrol. One of his men was wounded and in trying to help him, the soldier who was going home after... was killed.

Perhaps, I should think I've been in this long enough... let someone else do it... but even though I can't do anything but stay until I'm told I'm through... I don't feel too badly about it.

How about you?

Your letter of Mar. 28 came late this afternoon, sweetheart, and there are a couple of strange items.

You said Jane was "alerted" over the weekend. For what? Maybe there is another previous letter of explanation but I haven't received it.

Too, there was a report that MAYBE a lot of the old Stars and Strippers would work in N.Y. If I said anything like that I must have given you the wrong impression. Frankly, that NY office is so badly balled up I don't even think about it any more except that as soon as I can (and I don't know when it will be) I'm going to try and get back again. However, since combat men are getting only 30-day furloughs, personnel officers are bound to raise eyebrows when orders are asked for a man for the second time in a short space of time.

I'm afraid all this has been awfully discouraging, sweetheart. Please don't be disheartened. We'll just go on as we did as of yesterday when we didn't know anything and hope and pray for the best.

Things change so quickly and happen so queerly in *Stars and Stripes* that I'm not really "down" at all, even if I should be. I've just become calloused to everything and decided it was best to wait and see what happens, then strike quickly for my chance, whatever it may be.

If that "alert" business of Jane's is a trip to the ETO, I AM surprised. Now that I can figure out where I'll stand for about a half-year or more at least after VE day, I'd say you have my permission to come over IF that's your desire and IF you have the opportunity. First, however, won't you let me know what the deal is so I can see what kind of a picture it will be here?

I know, just as Benny can, if you were to come over I could transfer to Paris, for instance, in a minute and stay there as long as there is a paper there.

I'm saying this to help you make any decision you wanted to. Gosh knows, I realize it may not be at all possible. However, I know you want to be with me and me with you and if it can be done that way I say, "yes." If we make the move, then we'll just have to take our chances it works out all right.

Perhaps you want to stay in New York. I don't want you to get any ideas that I want you to rush right over. Maybe it would be better for you to stay there and just wait. It's awfully hard to me to see the complete picture from here.

If you can give me any idea which way you are going to turn it will give me peace of mind.

I only wish I could be with you tonight, even in spirit, and tell you... assure you... that everything is all right and not to even ruffle your head about anything I've said. Just go on as if this was just news and nothing more. I'm half afraid this will upset you somehow. If it does, I'm going to be disappointed in my level-headed girl.

I'll leave now and try awfully hard to just drop in and make love next time instead of mixing you all up and starting you thinking a lot of things. I'd rather picture you serene, placid and unruffled.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

PS: Please don't discuss these things with anyone but Jane and Marg. Not even 195. It's all hush-hush. The girls will know about it sooner or later.

April 8, 1945—New York

Darling,

This is going to be one of those books so I thought I'd better resort to the typewriter otherwise I'd probably have to put it in two envelopes. Anyway, since it is so long it will be easier to read.

You see this is the first time we've been together since last Tuesday night... that one I gave to Marg to put in the packet as I will do this one. That way, perhaps there won't be as much time lapsing between letters as if I would send it straight mail.

The explanation I'm sure you will be interested in, since that is a long time not to spend any time with you at all. It was unavoidable, of course. I wouldn't just neglect you, darling. Jane has been very ill since Wednesday... frightened me pretty much. She had a very bad strep infection in her throat. The doctor said that if I could take care of her here that she'd be much better off than being hospitalized so that's what we did. I didn't get much sleep until last night but she's well on the road to recovery so I'm not concerned about the sleep part. She ran a very high fever. The doctor prescribed sulfa, of course, that we finished up with yesterday morning. Now all she has to do is get strong and get over the effects of the sulfa. It was a long siege but it's over now and we just have to get her up and around. I had a couple of opportunities to write in between pills, so to speak, but I didn't want you to know about Jane and how frightened I was. I knew that my letter would probably reflect that, so now that it's all over I can tell you the whole story, and there'll be no wondering about how she is.

Three of your letters arrived this week to keep me company and they were more than welcome especially when I needed them so badly. They were those of March 27, 24 and 30th. Your thirteen page sermon was among them. I wasn't at all surprised at that, darling, because I knew that would be your reaction. I was awfully glad to get the one written the 30th the next day because I knew that maybe I had been forgiven. I would have been terribly disappointed, darling, if you hadn't made noises like a husband, especially about Hodenfield. I don't even like thinking about him or the episode, and would just as soon forget about the whole evening. Somehow or other we didn't see anything wrong about Joe, but I can see where even that wasn't conventional and shouldn't have happened. He was just too lazy to go home and our sofa was the easiest solution.

I'm not getting upset about your letter, hon, because I went through all that the morning after. Couldn't have felt worse mentally than if you had rendered your sermon that morning. I knew that I had displeased you very much and that very likely you would be disappointed in me. There aren't any excuses. I know I did wrong. All I needed was for you to say I was forgiven, and I have that now. It won't happen again, that's for sure, so let's forget about it.

As for me getting "high" again, I've seen too much of it, not myself but other people that I feel like never getting off the wagon. The *Stars & Stripes* and the neighborhood around here has decided that for me.

I wish I could assure you that everything is all right. The fact that your ache is making a few of the facts here distorted worries me... because, darling, I love you so much and there isn't anything wrong

that would make you love me less other than the fact that twice I didn't hear the little man say, "stop" in the glass. Please, darling, believe me.

How can I scold you, darling, when you never do anything to make me want to scold you. Besides I love you so much... don't think I could.

Earl called me yesterday and I had lunch with Marg and him. He told me about the five hundred you want me to dig up. I only hope, darling, that you have looked into the matter and considered from all angles. If I thought you were taking a chance on my account then I'd more than scold you. We'll get along all right without doing anything that might be wrong. I don't know anything about the deal but I want it to be right if you are going to be a part of it. [Absolutely no idea what this was all about.] I wish you wouldn't worry so much about finances. We'll manage. All I want is you and I never expect to be wealthy, darling. I'm trying to hang on to what we have and not go over my head. I know I haven't done very well at it. I haven't spent a lot of money for clothes, very little in fact. It's just that the necessities are so expensive that everything just goes. Every time you go to buy food it's a little more. If I were smart I could get a good job and make fifty or sixty a week then maybe we could get something ahead, but mine isn't very much. Let's not worry about it now. Let's concentrate on getting you home to stay. That's what I'm worried about.

Katherine Dear sent the bond and a very nice letter with it that I answered by return mail thanking her for the gift, etc., and that now that I wasn't working on Saturday, maybe I could get over to see Ray and the rest to say, "Hello."

Gee, hon, I think you do swell with your letter writing. I'm getting an average of two a week and I think that's wonderful because I know what you are doing. I get a lot of complaint from other people about you not writing them but I couldn't care less. Selfish, I guess, as long as you write to me, I'm not concerned about the others. So don't get angry with yourself... really no point to it.

As for the movie deal, I had the idea in the back of my mind all the while that maybe Steve did tell me that on his own especially when letter after letter came from you with no mention of it, and I knew Andy was in the vicinity and certainly you would have told me, I felt sure, if anything like that was pending. It all seemed much too good to be true so I really didn't get very excited about it. I'd be much surprised if it went through for any of them. I think if it were going to happen, it would have before now.

We heard that Bud was wounded. Is that true? That the reason he jumped was that the plane was on fire. If that's so, I'm sure you would have heard that from him. I think I said before there probably will never be another jump like that before or since.

Too, I'm glad that you know I'm working again. I was awfully mixed up that week, hon. I saw so darn many people and made out so many forms. Felt like I was in Russia or somewhere else but here. Mr. Walton, the man I work for now was very nice about letting me come around the corner to take care of Jane. I didn't work but very little those days. Never left Jane more than an hour and a half at a time. When it came around to turning my time in he wouldn't take any off the sheet for the time I hadn't worked.

I had a long letter from Mom this week. One of the best I've had in some time. I feel like she must be feeling more like her old self. She talks about coming here in May. She would like to go to her old home in Pennsylvania for over Decoration Day and then come to see me. I wish she would because I sure don't see any prospects of going home for awhile. fact it, hon, I don't want to go. Awfully afraid I might miss something. You might get to come home in a hurry or something. Silly, isn't it?

I have the power of attorney and also the check from Time. Very nice of them, wasn't it? I never expected anything from them after all this time. You have every reason to be proud, hon, even if you didn't contribute a good five hundred to the Kiley kitty. I'm awfully proud of you just because you're you. I'm glad that there is someone to take over the sports. That should relieve the work a little. I had a letter from Carl's Eve asking me to write to her. That was really a case, hon. I suppose you have been briefed on all the gory details. He seemed to delight in discussing it with anyone.

Must be that Mrs. K's face probably reflects Mr. K's love. Do you suppose that could be the explanation? She is a little older than Billee Gray was in that picture, by a couple of years almost. More than likely something you can't put your finger on. You look a little different, too. I saw it in that picture Bill Spear showed me of the office in Liege. You looked tired, hon. That isn't what is different, of course. I wanted to have you look up and see me. Maybe the strain would be gone. I get all filled up inside and want to say so many things that probably are better off unsaid, like "how much longer," etc.

We got the story over the wires of the Frankfurt paper and in today's Times is a story on it. The one that came over the wire mentions Benny and Joe's names but the story in the Times didn't. In Benny's letter written before he left for Frankfurt he says there will be three editions after VE day: Paris, Marseille and either Munich or Frankfort. Marg has received word too about the large New York bureau that very likely the *Stars and Stripes* will have, to go on its own... more space, its own machines, etc., and not depend on the ANS for anything.

I did the shopping for you yesterday. Only hope I got the right sizes in everything. I told the man your shirt size and he said size 38 in the t-shirts would be fine. They shrink a little when washed. Earl says he has two tan shirts he's hardly worn that are too small for him and he knows will fit you. If they don't, then I'll get some for you. I bought two pair of pajamas for you. You won't be wearing the wool ones this summer and you have only those two you took back so I thought you could use these. If they aren't loud enough, you'll just have to like them anyway.

Bill Spear is much annoyed that he hasn't heard from you. Seems he's written to you twice. Then Earl got a letter and he didn't. That didn't go over so big either. You have too many people to keep happy. I met Charlie White yesterday, except I'm sure he'll never remember the occasion. He kept muttering to himself, "so Charlie Kiley got himself a wife," as if he didn't know.

The doctor let Jane get up today, so she's dressed. I'm having a time keeping her quiet. He said she wasn't to overdo but she thinks she's well now. Calls me a tyrant for trying to hold her down. Another name she called me was the Feminine Buzz-Bomb this past week for something I did, don't

remember just why. She has been sufficiently scared this time, though, that she isn't going to go dashing back to work until she's well enough.

There is a doctor in the next block who was recommended by the telephone operator downstairs and he was really good. We were lucky to draw one like him out of the hat.

It's a beautiful day out... too bad Jane and I can't do a little walking. Now that we are having better weather and the days are longer we can go for walks after work.

I've been watching the ads for cabins, etc. Some of them look as if they might be worthwhile, but I don't think I should do anything until you come home and we decide what to do. In the meantime I'll be keeping a lookout for a place for us to go on that second honeymoon.

Earl sort of spoiled the day for me when he said he didn't expect to be home this time for two or three years. Hon, if I thought that... just don't know what I'd do. It just can't be that long. I'll sure be stowing away on something or other. I'll be using desperate measures, I know that.

I've talked to El a couple of times this week and she said the Easer pictures came out swell. We will see. She's having a set made for me.

I've sort of covered all the news around here, except I am missing you so. It's spring here, too, and we could be having such fun. Makes me want you all the more if that's possible.

One request before I say 'Bye for awhile. Jane has written Benny that she's been sick but you are not to tell him how serious it was, please. It's all over now and she's getting well so there isn't any need to get him all excited and worried and upset Jane with one of his letters giving her the devil... understand... for not telling him how serious it was. You can't tuck me in now, darling because it's the middle of the afternoon, so you'll just have to stick around 'til tonight. Though, I could almost go to sleep now. I'll make it early tonight, to catch up a little on the lost sleep. I love you so much.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

April 9, 1945—New York

Darling,

A few lines tonight. I thought Marg would come in last night and take any letter for the packet but she didn't so I mailed it as usual. She's here tonight and I'll let her take this one.

By way of explaining the long lapse between letters, I went into detail in yesterday's letter but very likely this will reach you first.

Jane has been quite illl and I played nurse. I went into all the details yesterday so I won't repeat here.

We stayed in last night. Jane, of course, couldn't go out yet, and I was too tired to go anywhere so we read and I wrote some long overdue letters and we went to bed early.

Jane is taking it easy, at least for awhile. I hope she won't go to work for a weak... give her plenty of time to get her strength back.

We had an early supper and took a walk after. Marg is here now. We tried playing hearts but none of us could remember just how.

I'm still a little tired. I guess it's a combination of staying up nights with Jane and the strain of worrying about her. I wanted you so those few days, I guess because I was frightened. She's getting along super swell now so there isn't any need to worry any longer. I asked you in the letter yesterday not to tell Benny how serious it was. She has written him about it, but not told how bad it was.

The weather still continues to be wonderful. I'm getting... or else it's just the same ache... a little worse with spring. Marg is ready to go so I'll say goodnight. You weren't able to tuck me in yesterday because I wrote in the middle of the afternoon, but tonight you can.

Take care of yourself, darling, and keep well. I love you so much.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

April 10, 1945—New York

Hello darling,

After those few hurried lines before Marg left last night, you really deserve a letter. I thought I might have a letter today but Mrs. Price got one instead from my husband and I didn't get one. She let me read it, however, over her shoulder. We thought at first that it was one from Benny. I guess it will be awhile before we hear from him since he's in Germany.

I can well imagine you'd like to be with him. It'd be lots more exciting there than Liege. I'm still glad you're where you are. The latest pictures of the prisoners held by the Germans and liberated by us are more than frightening... almost unbelievable but it must be so. Gives one such a helpless feeling, darling... that old feeling only stronger that comes back time and time again.

The news is almost unbelievable that at last the end does seem very close, so very close—then what? It keeps coming up more and more every day. Jane feels she will have to board a boat to get to Benny but somehow I feel it won't be like that... that you will come home and soon. Tell me darling, what you think or know. Probably you don't know anything and perhaps you'll be a little impatient at my anxiety or rather my impatience. Perhaps it will be many months after... we'll just have to wait and sweat it out, I guess. Somehow I can't see a way of getting over there, not that I'd hesitate for a moment if it came to that.

We are making plans to put our name on a waiting list for an apartment nearby because we can only stay here until October. I imagine there is a long waiting list and I don't imagine we would be permitted to take over the lease. Perhaps we won't have to be concerned about it and we'll be living in our respective apartments. That sounds much better.

We had a letter from Charlie Notley. Their setup sounds like seventh heaven. They have already bought a lot and are getting building priorities to build a house. Jack has set up the agency for the Aetna Insurance... has an office and a secretary.

Jane went to the doctor today. He gave her a tonic and told her she couldn't go to work before Monday. I really think he's pretty good. I'm so glad we know of a good one in the neighborhood. she's been busying herself around the apartment polishing silver, etc., getting my lunch. She's getting along fine.

It's so nice to be able to come home for lunch. I can see if there's mail from you, do a few things and relax a little. It's much better than a lunch counter. Makes me a little angry every time I think of not having a job like this when you were here.

The radio went dead yesterday again so around the corner I trotted with it again. This time a tube was burned.

We're having a curfew in 5L... in bed by eleven and everyone out at ten thirty. We're making it doctor's orders. Marg just doesn't know when to go home. We enjoy her company very much, but it's all hours before we get to bed so we're telling her very truthfully that Jane has to get more rest which is no story. She really should get more now for awhile and what with the last rejection slip I

pulled from the Blood Bank it wouldn't do me any harm either.

I've moved over to the sofa since Jane's illness. Funny, darling... the other night I dreamed about you all night. You had those blue pajamas on, the striped ones. That's silly because I had them on. Your hair was mussed as if you'd been sleeping. It was so plain, I didn't want to wake up. I just wanted to stay on that cloud. I rarely ever dream of you... only a few times since you're gone. Do you ever dream about me?

We went for a walk last night and found a French bakery on Eleventh Street someone told us about. They bake out in the shop, or it's better said the baker and shop is one big room. They have French ice cream, too. That we haven't tried but Jane walked down this afternoon and bought two very luscious plum tarts.

We're trying to read Philip Wylie's "Generation of Vipers." I'd hate to have his mind. He must not be very happy living with himself. He doesn't seem to see any good in anyone. He doesn't take us as individuals... a little like Bud's Home Front articles only a steadier diet.

We're listening to a program of recorded music. They just played "You Made Me Love You." I didn't really, did I? You always said I did. Funny now that night seems so long ago. Wasn't it one of the first numbers we



Philip Wylie (1902-1971) was a prolific American author of works ranging from pulp science fiction, mysteries, social diatribes and satire, to ecology and the threat of nuclear holocaust. His nonfiction book of essays, "Generation of Vipers" (1942), was a best-seller during the 1940s. "Perhaps the most vitriolic attack ever launched on the American way of living—from politicians to professors to businessmen to Mom to sexual mores to religion—Generation of Vipers ranks with the works of De Tocqueville and Emerson in defining the American character and malaise."

danced to? I remember the night too you gave me the perfume. I was so surprised. They are such nice memories but our new memories are so much more memorable. The night you gave me the “L’heure Intime” after the trip to St. Louis. How happy we were to see each other after ten days. Can you imagine what it will be like after all these months!!!

Our being apart doesn’t seem to make much sense, does it? If anyone ever really belonged together, I’m sure we do.

I can’t help being a little bitter when I see the indifference between some of the fellows and their wives who are back now. Makes me boil inside but then who am I to judge?

Marg told me last night that she thought Morrow and Libby were living together again. It’s about time. Certainly they should have made up their minds one way or the other. Bob Ward seems to be unhappy that his wife is still here... makes me sick inside.



The United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO) was a convention of delegates from 50 Allied nations that took place from 25 April 1945 to 26 June 1945 in San Francisco, United States. At this convention, the delegates reviewed and rewrote the Dumbarton Oaks agreements.[1] The convention resulted in the creation of the United Nations Charter, which was opened for signature on 26 June.

Buck [Phil Bucknell] is back from Michigan and is going to the San Francisco Conference. He had great expectations of hobnobbing with all the civilian reporters on the train en route. Col. Forsberg [not sure of spelling] sort of threw a monkey wrench in his plans by informing him that he is to fly out and under condition is to fraternize with the other correspondents.

I’m reading a French novel, period of Louis XIV.. becoming quite familiar with the Louvre in Paris, Caen, Nancy ad other places. It’s not too interesting, but decided to finish it. It’s supposed to be true, called Ivory Mischief. I think it belongs to Jack and Charley Notley.

I think Jane and I are going to Bear Mountain for the weekend. The doctor advised lots of sun so maybe if it’s going to be nice that’s what we’ll do. I wish I could afford to take a week off and go to the country somewhere with her.

I repeat again, darling, that you shouldn’t tell Benny how ill Jane was. He gets so darn excited. He’s going to have her sick enough when he gets her letter. That will be all that’s necessary.

I called his father on Saturday after the danger was over and told him about Jane. She didn’t want to see him so I told him the doctor didn’t want her to have visitors yet. He called the next day but we’ve not heard hide nor hair of him since.

The weather still continues to be super. It's so nice out. The nights are just meant for walking. I'm not missing you very much!!!

I've rattled on and on not saying much. Do you mind? I wanted to be with you but didn't have particularly much to say.

When I say goodnight, I think I'll take a shower and climb in the crib. Wish it was one of those nights when you showered early and had your robe and p.j.'s on reading the paper. Maybe I could curl up on your lap and just be happy. I always liked the way my face sort of fit in your neck, as if it belonged there... but it does. You're so nice, Mr. K. and I love you so very much. I like all your funny little ways. Your impatience at me that used to show now and then... the match incident... the night the clothesline broke and you wrung all the clothes out after I'd done such a sad job... letting the apple pie run over in the oven and smelling up our wonderful little shoebox. Not hurrying fast enough for you when we were going out. The way you would shake your head over my drawer that had my makeup in... it was always clean but disorderly.

I'd better say goodnight, darling and let you move over to your house. Tuck me in nice. Love me and miss me.

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

April 12, 1945—New York

Hello darling,

Didn't expect to see me this afternoon? It was kind of surprising to me, too.

I spent one of my sleepless nights last night for apparently no good reason. Don't get it... didn't have an ache or pain. My conscience was bothering me... just couldn't sleep. Mr. Walton told me to come home this afternoon, that we didn't have anything urgent to do. He's a nice old goat.

I went to the bank and scared up the five hundred. Golly, hon, that represents quite a few bonds. Scares me a bit when I think of what Earl is carrying back with him. Wouldn't mind going along and keeping an eye on our bit.

While I was in the bank I talked with the man who took care of the bonds about a building loan. I gave him an estimate of the cash we'd have on hand. He said we wouldn't have any trouble... that we could get a GI loan and an FHA to build with. Also he said, that until the war was over altogether, we'd only be able to get building priorities for supplies and materials if we built in a defense area. That's interesting, anyway. These little bits of information will be of use later on.

You know, hon, when I went shopping for you the other day, I bought a dozen t-shirts. I couldn't remember when I got in the store whether it was 1/2 dozen or a dozen. Don't worry, you're only getting a half dozen. I exchanged three for size and Jane bought them from me and the other three Marg bought so it turned out ok.

Marg was over for dinner last night. We were going to a movie but went for a walk instead. You'd laugh at us. We wandered around all over and came home with a bunch of asparagus, some spinach, two flower pots of ivy, two other bright flower pots to set the ivy in and some ice cream from the funny little French bakery I told you about.

Marg is coming down again for dinner to help us eat the asparagus and we're really going to see a movie this time since the only one on the corner is worth while seeing.

Do you ever get to go to movies now that you have to work such long hours? I hope now and then you get a little relaxation like a movie.

Mr. Walton was relating more of his Army of Occupation tales yesterday. I believe I told you he was a Lieutenant in an M.P. battalion in the last war. He asked to remain over there. Seems he had quite a time for himself.

Received a long letter from Warren today. He said he'd had a V-mail from you after so long a time but he realized I had top number on your correspondence list. He has made an application for a transfer to Asheville or vicinity and it seems to be going through. I only hope if he does get it that he doesn't go worrying Mom too much.

I lay on my back a long time last night just staring at the ceiling. The most wonderful pictures are on our ceiling, darling, even with my eyes open I can see them. I'll bet, too, darling, they are the same pictures you see on your ceiling... almost, anyway. Probably I remember things you don't and vice versa. Do you suppose we'll ever get our pictures together? I hope very soon.

We have a visitor, but I'm not being particularly sociable since I know the conversation will be strictly hometown and old times. Jane and Benny's friend, Dick Rollins, a banker, I believe... now he's an executive officer in the Navy... very smooth, too, by the way. You're much nicer, Mr. K. He's a good friend of Jane's aunt in Des Moines. He heard Jane had been ill so dropped by to chat for a bit.

Jane's getting bored, anyway, so it'll do her good. You can imagine... it's been over a week now and it's only been since Monday that she's seen anyone else but me. You can imagine Benny being cooped up that long... it would be the same with Jane.

More and more it's amazing that we get along as well as we do, because certainly black and white couldn't be any more unlike than we are.

Marg brought a very interesting story in last night that came over the Time magazine wires. Lois Bucknell was able to get a copy and gave it to Marg for Jane. Goes into more detail than the one that came over the bureau's wire service.

They must have had quite a time... I can just see Benny trotting around Frankfort. Joe I can't imagine somehow. I can well imagine you would like to be a part of that deal. I'm sorry you weren't able to go along. I've said before, darling, I don't want to hold you back on anything you might want to do. I know you don't take unnecessary chances. I'd worry, sure, but I worry anyway so it wouldn't make a lot of difference, and you'd be happy in your work and that's most important. [This story turned out to be largely wrong.]

Still no mail this week yet, except for the one you sent Mrs. Price. Just a wee bit jealous that I didn't get one.

I haven't called 195 in several days. The darn telephone bill last month sort of keeps me away from the phone. I'm going over on the weekend. I want to go through your clothes again to see if I can't give some of the things to the church. Seems silly to hold on to some of the things.

I forgot to tell you about the other additions we have to our window sills besides the ivy. Jane bought pansies yesterday for her and a bright red geranium potted for me. We look like the very breath of spring.

I do miss you so. How do you stand it, hearing it all the time? I can't help writing it because it's there always. This is only half a life for me...not even half, really. Just doesn't add up.

Surely it must make you feel worse, but what should I do, write and tell you I get along very well without you when I don't? That would be a lie, and a bad one at that. Do you just get impatient with me? I probably sound like a spoiled brat or something. Certainly not the morale-lifting type, am I?

Seems funny but nice to be with you this time of day. We're hoping we'll be able to get to bed early tonight immediately after the movie. I dropped the hint last night about Jane having to get more rest but it rolled off like water. Marg didn't leave 'til after eleven. We didn't get in bed 'til twelve. I'll try again tonight. Jeepers, I wouldn't hurt her feelings for the world.

I'd better say 'bye for awhile. Be sure you come back tonight and tuck me in. Must be you weren't around last night. That's why I stayed awake. Probably you stayed too long with Tillie at the "Clip Clop." Could be.

I love you so much, so very much, my dearest. Keep well and don't be impatient. Perhaps it won't to too long now.

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

April 13, 1945—Liege

Hello sweetheart,

You are going to be awfully sorry you married a newspaperman before another week or so passes. In fact, you are going to regret having a managing editor in the family.

I won't say much, but I have three letters of yours, together with another from El, one from Warren and another from John Horn of Newsweek. They came yesterday and today and I haven't opened them yet. Isn't that an awful confession to make?

But, please, don't go away angry yet. Give me a chance to tell my story. I've been starting to tell you for five days now without getting beyond the first sentence... it's that much of a scramble around here. I won't read your letters until I get home tonight. Then, I'll sleep on them.

To begin with, I am managing editor of Liege. David, in Paris, went into the hospital with asthma or something on Tuesday. Forthwith, Paris called down Larsen. And, I climbed into the saddle up here. I know now why I didn't want the job before. It's a swift but short life.

Yesterday morning I took over, and after putting out a decent eight-pager was sitting at my desk at about midnight sorting through papers, etc., and getting ready to write the letter I had been trying to get at for days.

The teletype machine was "out," as it had been for two days and the telephone buzzed. It was the Paris communications office hysterically relaying the "President Dead" flash.

It took me a minute to gather my wits, let the shock sink in, then start the machine working here. I had the presses stop (just like they do in the movies), had them "kill" 60,000 papers that had already been printed, then proceeded to make over pages 1 and 8. By the time we got the presses going again at 1:30, it was necessary for us to kill off our of the eight pages in order for the presses to finish the run at 10 a.m. I got out of here at 6:15, was up again at 10:30 and in the office again.

I got out a darn good paper tonight, if I may pat myself on the back, with all the follow-up details on the president, past and present, solid page of obituary, page of pictures, etc.

That wasn't bad enough but at 11:00, when I was getting normal again, one of my underground agents tipped me off that Von Papen, Ribbentrop and Von Rundstadt are not "guests" of Eisenhower. At the same time, Stimson came through with an announcement that war may be over soon, and nobody knows where Ike is.

All of which means I dare not leave here until about 4:00 when it becomes almost impossible for us to make any changes.

That's not all. Another flash from Leiser at the front says the Ninth Army may be in Berlin or on the outskirts by tomorrow.

Oh, it's a lot of fun, though.

Now, this is what I've been trying to find time to tell you.



We received word the Liege edition was going to close on April 17. The Nancy edition, too. The new Frankfurt paper would service all five armies up front with Paris taking in all of the area in between and Nice handling the few troops in the south. London would continue.

Benny was going to Nice as managing editor. Bob was being recalled to Paris from Frankfurt to run the news service again. Larsen definitely was going to Paris and is there now. I was to go to Frankfurt, together with three others from here and the whole Nancy bunch. The rest of my gang here was to go to Nice and Paris.

However, the past two days have made what may be a big change. Frankfurt hasn't turned out so good and we have been told we are likely to stay in operation here longer. How long I don't know.

Now, comes another angle. Benny called me from Seventh Army HQ tonight... that's about 400 miles away and he sounded as if he was around the corner... and wants me to go to Nice with him. Says he can fix it. The Riviera sounds good, especially since Nice will be a big paper after VE day but not so big until then, and especially since everything seems to have gone haywire in Frankfurt. Bud called me from Ninth AF HQ today and advised me not to go to Frankfurt if I can help it. Frankly, I don't know which way to turn. I've been told I was going there and may not be able to do anything about it. I'll have to wait and see. They want me (they say) to go in the slot there. I wouldn't do it if there was a better man for the job there already and I believe there is. Moreover, I'll be working for a guy I don't know... named Rogosta or something. He'll be the managing editor.

Bud says he has written his half of the book already and is trying to get in touch with Andy to find out if he's going to writ or has written his half. Personally, I think Andrew right now is bent more on getting to Berlin and thinking little of a book.

Me? I'm just having the time of my life.

Sweetheart, please forgive me for all this and not being able to come over and see you but you do understand. I love you so much I just have to keep asking forgiveness in fear of you even pouting. Stay beautiful and miss me lots.

You might get bold and kiss Jane for me. That's the way I feel tonight... tired, but awfully good inside.

Goodnight, darling.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

April 14, 1945—New York

My dearest,

Seems an age since I was last with you... Thursday, in fact.

I'll have to go back. It was after I finished my letter to you that we heard the startling news that Roosevelt was dead. Even now it seems unbelievable. Everything has seemed at a standstill since the news came over the air about six. The radio has carried nothing but news and funeral music since

then. Today, a recounting of the services.

It's too bad he wasn't able to finish what he started. We'll have to get along as best we can without his leadership. I have all the faith in the world that we will. There's a long road ahead and sometimes I wonder if we're going to see what we're fighting for. It seems so near now and yet so far.

Marg came down Thursday night and had dinner. It seems Russ Jones and Joe McBride arrived. They were all in the Little Campus when the news broke. In fact, Marg had left and heard it on the street so she turned around and went back. Buck and Earl rushed back to the office. I understand Earl went to Washington to cover the funeral so his departure will undoubtedly be delayed.



Funeral cortege in Washington DC for Roosevelt.



Later in the evening we went to the corner movie. Saw a very good one, too, "A Song to Remember" with Merle Oberon. It's the story of Chopin and Georges Sand.

Last night I went to 195 to see the folks. Pop was fixing a ham in preparation for a party they are to have tonight. El and the baby were out. Bette was dressing for a date that arrived shortly after I did. Quite a dashing guy, very blonde, tall and a sailor. Greeted me like his long, lost cousin. El says he comes in and makes himself at home. Seems she's only known him about ten days. Seems like a nice guy.

The baby and El came in soon after. What a big girl she's getting to be. Doesn't seem like a baby any longer. El had received a raft of letters from Tom and a score of pictures. He looks great.

We had company later... your cousin Irene. I left early, about nine-thirty. They wanted me to come over tonight, but I didn't feel like a party.

Jane and I had a big day. We went uptown early to the bank... decided then to take a Fifth Avenue bus. The day was perfect. We went all the way to the end of the line to the Cloisters. What a lovely, quiet place. We loved it... such a gorgeous view of the river. We were there hours. Came home in a shower, however. Had supper and went to another movie, "The Keys of the Kingdom." You must see it if you have an opportunity. You'll like it very much. I'm anxious to read the book now.

I've been gone for a little while. Decided to take my shower so that when I finished you could really tuck me in. I feel all nice and clean in your blue 'jamas. Think I'll keep them for my own. The fact that they are too big make them all the more comfortable. Tell me, darling, do you wear those that I turned into a camouflage suit or not? You took them with you, I'm sure, because I haven't seen them around in ages.

This weather we're having is almost unbelievable. It's so perfect. We could have such fun.

We've been hearing rumors the Liege edition is being abandoned. Certainly you can't be supplying the 1st and 9th now. They are miles beyond you now. I'm assuming that very likely some change is being made since there's been no mail in some time. The last I had was written over two weeks ago. It doesn't sound like long ago but seems as age to me.

For the first time since Jane's illness, we're going to sleep together. I haven't minded the sofa at all. It's a very comfortable one, but the way.

As you can see, we didn't go to Bear Mountain. We'll wait awhile before we go 'til the weather is a little more settled.

Roosevelt's death has certainly shoved the war news to the second page... both press and radio.

I had a letter from Joe yesterday. Jane had one also. Seems he's in the dog house with the brass, too, what with his getting lost and turning up in Frankfurt. I can't imagine Joe at the front somehow. He hates Paris. His letter was very despondent. Do you suppose he misses the auxiliary? Also he felt badly about breaking the crystal on your watch. I hope he can get it fixed for you as he says he can.

I'm curled up on the sofa and Jane is in the big chair. Both of us writing to our guys. She's so much better... looks like Jane now. She plans on returning to work Monday.

The bed's already down for us to hop into. We've had more trouble with the darn thing. The clamps on the end of the mattress don't hold very well and invariably the darn mattress sticks which makes it necessary for me to stand on my head almost to get it loose.

I nearly forgot. Mrs. K. hasn't worn her suit since Easter 'til today and I find I'll have to pay a visit to the tailor before I can wear it comfortably. The skirt practically falls off me so you see Mrs. K. has lost a little weight even if she still can't touch her toes.

I miss your exercises. I think I'll try my best to touch my toes and surprise you.

I'm so weary. My eyes are closing. Could you tuck me in nice and hold me tight? I love you so, so very much. Keep well and don't worry about me. Goodnight, my dearest one.

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

April 15, 1945—New York

Darling,

I wrote you a letter from a funny little place this afternoon, but it was a bit silly so I'm back again. I was going to finish it at home, anyway.

I'll brief you on what we did. We slept late. I would have risen earlier but I wanted Jane to sleep as long as she could so I stayed there until I could just make the last Mass. We had a big breakfast and started out with our books to the East River. We stopped on the way over at Howard Johnson's on 52nd St. and had a luscious chocolate soda. I remember you told me about those places.

After going beyond 1st Avenue, we found benches along the river but best of all, a deserted pier that the sun seemed to be shining on especially bright. That was where we sat for a couple of hours soaking up the sunshine and watching the river make its way to the sea. Numerous tugs and barges made their way up and down the river as well as big transport planes flying low over our heads. Those made us especially wishful.

I thought how wonderful it would be to follow the river out to the sea and find all the strange places it would lead to. I'd have made a good tramp or sailor, darling. Don't worry, all my adventurous tendencies are concentrated on being with you whether it be here or in Timbuktu... doesn't really matter so long as you are there.

I loved sitting on the end of that pier leaning against the piling. There were lots of people along the river sitting on the benches but somehow no one came near our little pier.

We left about five and walked and walked, then took a Second Avenue bus to Fourteenth Street and walked crosstown to the apartment.

I scrubbed the bathroom when we got home and did the ironing I had washed before I went out. We've spent practically all the daylight hours outside in the air and sun which is very good for us.

Our supper was late tonight. We only finished a bit ago. Now Jane is doing her ironing. She is definitely going back to work tomorrow. It's good to see her looking like her old self again. With all the sleep and fresh air I'm getting, I'm feeling like my old self again, too.



The East River riverfront as it looked in 1931, which is the way Billee and Jane would have seen it. It has been completely transformed and almost none of the buildings fronting the water remain.

I thought perhaps Earl would call me but perhaps he isn't back from Washington or maybe he went to Hyde Park today, too.

I'm hoping there'll be a letter in the morning from you, especially telling me about the money. We haven't seen Russ Jones or the other fellow, Joe McBride I believe is his name.

I understand that Russ Jones is bringing back the money order for our wedding present. I have no way of knowing who I am to thank, etc. Could you find out from Benny and take care of it? Chances are you already have. I'll use it to buy more crystal.

I must write a letter to Joe tonight, too and let him know he shouldn't feel so bad about the watch. I think his morale has hit a new low being in the Paris office.

I'm enclosing a few of the Easter pictures. Some were good, others not so good.

We have about decided that with VE day practically here, we'd be smart to hang onto the jobs we have rather than take summer jobs because a few months after VE day there will probably be a cutback and jobs won't be as plentiful. So you won't have to worry about another new address. Does that make you feel better?

We're turning in early so I'd better get a shower for myself. Stay around a bit, though. I want especially to be tucked in tonight.

You know, while Jane was ill, we had an anniversary... three years, remember? April 4th and 5th. I didn't get to write you those days but I remembered, darling, every second of the time we were together. They were such beautiful hours.

I love you, Mr. K., so much. I feel sure, my darling, that our reunion is near. I praying that it is, that this living a half a life will soon be over for us. Sometimes, I wonder if God doesn't get tired listening to the same prayers. I try not to make it sound selfish. Love me, always and try not to be as impatient as I am. Goodnight, my dearest one.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

April 16, 1945—New York

My darling,

I love you so much. My morale took a jump up to that cloud, darling, because there were three letters this morning to make me go to work with a light heart in spite of the dull gray day that it's been.

The letters were those of Easter, April 4 and 7. I could almost say that you were as lonely as I on Easter. It was such a long, lonely day. Like you, I had an Easter present that day, too, in the form of a letter waiting for me when I returned from 195 that night. You will have my Easter letter by now.

As for your covering Bill's remarks about your behavior in Liege... hon, I didn't think I was being critical... only teasing you about the things he said. His description of you in a Canadian field jacket

was anything but complimentary... didn't like it. I'm sure the jacket must have been too small for you. I believe you when you say you've lost seven pounds. Don't take me seriously and go on a diet because I'd never forgive myself if you became ill and that's anything but a healthy climate or country you're in.

I don't mind you going to the "Clip Clop." Think it's nice you have a second "Lamb and Lark" to go to, though I know there'll never be another of those. As for your French, apparently you've learned all that's necessary. Will you accept my very modest, "Oui, ma chere. Voulez vous venez par va ma maison, s'il vous plait."

I could have told him that you didn't waste much time going to bed when you were working at being Mr. K., but I thought I'd better not. I don't imagine it would bother him on way or the other. He's sort of the cold fish type.

Jane had a long letter from Benny today telling her a little of the difficulties they underwent. Kay Konzelman had a letter from Carl telling her that Benny captured twenty-five Germans. That I can just see... if that's so, Benny must be in his glory. He never quite got over missing out on the Normandy deal. There's a long article in the Editor and Publisher magazine that Jane brought home about them all. I'll see if I can get one for our scrapbook. If not, I'll just make a copy to paste in. Benny also mentioned that he thought he'd be going back to Paris. Somehow I can't see Larsen in the role of managing editor of the Frankfurt edition, especially if it's going to be one of any size.

I left my pen in the office... that's why I'm resorting to the typewriter. Forgive me, please.

I love your stopping in the middle of the afternoon to relate the interview with Goodfriend and the other brass. Makes me feel a part of it all and I am so interested. We've been wondering all week what was going to happen to the Liege edition and now we know.

The news from Eisenhower tonight wasn't too encouraging but makes sense, I suppose. I'm speaking of the statement he issued today that there would be no proclamation of VE day until all of Germany had been occupied.

Marg just came with a little more news from the *Stars and Stripes* bureau. She received a letter from Hod and also one from Andy. One day they get a message that the Liege edition has been disbanded and then the next day they get one saying something else. To top everything, Bill Spear didn't know until the next day that the president had died. Seems no one bothered to get in touch with him. He was a little annoyed. Also Charlie White disappeared Thursday. Today a telegram came from his home, quote, "back home in Indiana... can I do any hometown news... am getting fat... when does furlough come through?" Technically, he's AWOL and they can't find a way to cover him. Morrow is hospitalized because of a serious infection in his foot. Libby is much annoyed because I think he's in Halloran and she has to take an afternoon off to go and see him. [Halloran Hospital in Staten Island was the largest U.S. Army hospital in the world. In 1951, it became the infamous Willowbrook State School, warehousing thousands of children with intellectual disabilities until 1987, when it was closed in the face of a massive public outcry.]

I had a long letter from Lee today. Seems they are getting along fine. Must be they plan to stay there because she wants you and I to come and pay them a visit when you come home. She told me an amusing story about the kids. Seems they were telling about their relatives with a group of neighbor children, each bragging about a relative's accomplishments. Sherry declared that she had an uncle who could lay an egg. (An old trick of my uncle Fred's that he used to pull on us when we were kids and that we firmly believed until we got old enough to know better.) She sort of stopped the discussion for a time until another one in the group said that he also had an uncle who could lay an egg. Sherry was terribly disappointed; she just couldn't believe anyone could surpass Uncle Fred. Young Bill was taking it all in and said quietly, "but my uncle can hatch it." That finished the discussion. No one had anything else to add. Lee said she had to leave very quickly or else spoil everything because it was a very serious discussion.

The cartoon leaves me speechless. What did we do to deserve an original? Surely they didn't run this in the *Stars and Stripes*? Needless to say we both got a laugh out of it. I noticed the only comment you made, if you can call it that, was to put a staff sergeant's rating on the GI. You should be ashamed of yourself, Mr. K. Honest, though, it is cute. Was a wee bit surprised. That bathtub scene takes the cake. [This cartoon has not been identified.]]

According to Marg, Mazo's orders are being changed or something so he probably won't be going back as soon as he expected. I still would like to hear first-hand about the money. Perhaps I will, now that I'm getting a bit of respite, since Mazo will be around for a bit.

Joe's letters to all of us are the last word... morose is the word. Yours were never like these. He must be in bad shape.

Guess I'd better say goodnight. We're either going to wrap Marg up and send her home or else put her to bed on the sofa because Jane has to hit the hay early. She's pretty tired after her first day at work.

Stick around a bit while I shower and then you can tuck me in. Will that be all right? Be nice and clean then. I love you so much, and miss you even more if that's possible. So, so happy that I got some mail today and the cartoon made me smile along with your Easter letter and your comeback on Bill's remarks. Goodnight, with a nice long gloppy kiss, the kind you like.

All my love and kisses, always your Billee

April 17, 1945—New York

Darling,

It's another anniversary for us, apart as usual. Seems as if we'd almost get used to it but I'm awfully glad we don't.

Earl called me a few minutes ago at the office and said he'd wait while I brought the things you asked for to him this evening. Seems he's taking off in the morning.

Thought it would be nice if he could take a letter back to you. Make the distance a wee bit shorter when we can do things like this.

I'll write you again tonight so this will be sort of hurried.

You will undoubtedly receive the other things along with this. I thought surely I'd hear first hand from you about this but so far, nothing. I'm sending it along with Earl as per your request in his letter with a prayer that it will be all right.

Please, please don't take any unnecessary chances. It isn't that important. I'd never get over it if something like that kept you from coming home when the time comes.

I wish it were me bringing all the things to you. I'd like to see you in your new shirts and p.j.'s. Hope they are what you want.

I'll be getting another box off very soon with other necessities.

I think tonight for a little while I'll curl up in our corner and look at our album and just drift back to eight months ago today. I was such a perfect day. Couldn't anyone be any happier than me.

I'm remembering too that according to your promise, you should be home four months from today. Is that order a bit too much??? Don't you think you and "Ike" could get together and fold this thing up? Maybe we could all mutiny as Joe suggests. Anyway, four months from today makes nice dreaming material.

This is on the company's time so I'll say 'bye for a bit, just until tonight when you may come back and we'll say goodnight while you tuck me in properly.

I love you, darling, with all my heart. Be good.

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

April 17, 1945—New York

My darling,

Happy anniversary. How are you this fine rainy night? It's a little warmer but it's the same kind of a night as the Monday you and Benny came back from La Guardia and we all stayed here. We were a bit crowded that night but I'm sort of glad we did all stay together.

It's not a night fit for man nor beast, but it's to be expected this time of the year, I guess.

I said goodbye to Earl tonight. Dashed down after work with the underwear and p.j.'s and the money. I hope some nice angel looks after that money. I'm a bit worried about it. If you're going to be in Paris a few days starting Thursday and Earl goes overnight way, you'll make connections and that will be good. Felt sorry for Rita because I know only too well how she feels. She's staying on in New York for a few weeks with her mother so we'll probably see her.. at least I told her she'd be welcome any time.

I brought Marg home with me for dinner. Bill Gibson and Marg and I stopped in the Little Campus for a drink that developed into two hours, then we went our respective ways. Seems he has wife trouble, too. He lives in White Plains but never goes home. Russ Jones, Dick Wilbur and Joe McBride, I learned afterwards, were milling around the office but no one bothered to make any introductions.

Earl told me about the paper folding and your upcoming transfer to Pfungstadt. That was what you wanted, yes... definitely not to remain in Paris, I know. Seems Earl is in the doghouse, too. Covering the President's funeral in Washington and Hyde Park made him late leaving and upon asking for a request for extra poundage was criticized and refused because of not leaving according to his orders.

Morrow has really been in bad shape with his infected foot. He failed to respond to the sulfa and they had to use injections of penicillin. He's much improved now. Earl went to see him this morning.

I gave Earl a letter to take back to you. Wish I could curl up in one of his pockets and pay you a visit.

Marg just went home a bit ago. It developed last night that we put her to bed on the sofa so we could all retire at a decent hour.

I'm having to sit on Jane. Like me, she's not doing well financially either but she's trying to augment her income by working nights. I've thought of that, too, but didn't think I could stand the pace. It was all right with the hand work because my hours were so short. They're short now but not that short. With her recent illness only days behind her, I think the idea very impractical. Don't mention this to Benny, however, because he'd unleash a long spiel about it. I think I've won out so far.

I have your April 4th letter here beside me. I'm pretending it's an anniversary letter. You're wonderful to remember everything. I wanted so to write that night but Janie was at her worst. I knew somehow that you were probably remembering, too, just as I was.

It was a weekend I'll always remember. I was so very young, and so excited with you and New York. You mostly, of course. New York and its dazzle was the background. I was so happy I had the white dress. I hated the dress before, but I had no other so it had to be that one. I'll try, to have one like it. It's yellow with age now, but I'll keep that one, anyway. I couldn't see myself doing away with it. My mental album has some memorable pictures of you. I'll never forget your face that Saturday afternoon as you stood at the bottom of the stairs at Penn Station looking for me and then the expression of sheer delight that drove away all my fears when you saw me and came bounding up the stairs. The way you looked when you asked me to be Mrs. K. The nights at the Inn. I'll never forget the feel of your arms about me. The ride back from Dot's the last night we were together before I went back home. Never will I forget the way you looked at me that night all the way to Penn Station. You rushed up so quickly to me last August in the station and rushed me out so quickly that it's still a bit blurred... all a little unbelievable. I remember the first time I saw you asleep. The special way you looked at me. More than all the rest, the way you looked waiting for me at the end of the aisle at St. Al's. The way you looked carrying me over the threshold at the Lexington. We

were so happy. There's another very special look I can't forget, that I'm not going to tell you about. That's mine and I'm not even going to share it with you. Do you mind? Then there's the way you looked the night you came back from St. Louis. I'll not ever forget how happy I was to have you back. I think the world could have tumbled apart that night and I wouldn't have cared.

You know, darling, my life before Jan 17, 1942 seems very dim. The memories are sort of blurred now. All I can think of is you and the time we've spent together these last few years, little as it is.

Did I tell you Bucknell was awarded the Bronze Star today by Col. Forshberg for his D-Day jump?

Lee told me in her letter that Bob Glass was killed on Iwo Jima. I think he was an officer in the Marines. You remember who he was... football star in Massillon. My first beau, too. He left a wife and baby in Miami. I hope he knew a little family happiness of his own because he sure had a heck of a life as a kid. I felt sorry for him. The Booster Club at home practically raised him. He had a lot of good in him, though. Gives you a funny feeling, doesn't it, when you know someone like that. You've been going through it all along, I know.

I seem to have been writing for hours, but that's because Mom, Warren and Lee hall had letters written to them. I should write to Joe, but I'll wait 'til tomorrow.

Nearly forgot... Dunbar is dead. We had to bury him in the incinerator last night so we're going to return Margaret to the turtle store. I'm sure she wouldn't like living alone. I think Dunbar missed you and Benny and perhaps died of a broken heart. All the energy seemed to go out of him after you left. He's just not been the same turtle at all and, of course, as a result, Margaret hasn't been very happy either. I'm sure Dunbar must be in turtle heaven now. Jane says she doesn't think she'll tell Benny, that it'll probably upset him.

I have to wash my hair and it's late. Should have been in the crib hours ago, but I wanted to spend all of our anniversary I could with you. I love you so. Tuck me in nice. Here's an anniversary kiss along with one for goodnight.

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

April 18, 1945—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

This is like old times again. Benny is sitting across the desk from me writing to Jane.

I got in from Liege about an hour ago, after a seven-hour drive in an open jeep with a hot sun practically baking me.

I won't go into any details in this one, darling. I'm not settled yet and until I do the letters will probably seem sketchy to you.

After a couple of days in Paris, I'll be going to Pfungstadt. Three others from Liege are going with me. Bob and Benny are back in Paris and what they are to do I don't know. Benny was to go to Nice but today he was informed the deal was changed and he'll possibly remain in Paris. Meanwhile, Bud

is going to Nice with most of the fellows I had in Liege. I don't even know what kind of a job I'm supposed to do in Pfungstadt. It will work out okay, though. It always has.

I've been getting your mail regularly and loving you to pieces for it. The back letters are in my bag, with the exception of the one which came today in the envelope. It told of you getting the money from the bank. My plan is to send it back to you piecemeal so you can look for it.

I haven't received any word of you getting the \$100 I sent on March 22. I hope it's reached you by now.

Getting back to Liege... I was managing editor for the last five editions. Did pretty good, too. I wrote to you after the Roosevelt news and expecting other big stories to break. Sure enough the Von Papen thing came off as expected although Rundstadt and Ribbentrop remain mysteries.

It's a beautiful day here today. The kind I'd love to some home, or back from where I've been, and find you waiting for me. When we drove into Paris I had to think of my return from St. Louis. I wished so much for you to be here.

Joe is on the other side of the office working on a story. Gosh, it's like the old days. I only wish we could all stay together. Well, that's the way it is sometimes, I guess.

Benny received word today about Jane so he knows all about it. I sure hope she's up and back on her feet again. I believe he just sent a cable to her.

Forgive me for the rush, sweetheart. I'll be back later tonight if I can. I'm staying with Benny in a hotel while I'm here.

Goodbye, angel, and love me lots. I'm missing you so very much.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

April 19, 1945—New York

Hello darling,

I hit the jackpot this week... already five letters. Yesterday the long one of April 7 arrived and today your April 13, believe it or not, arrived.

They all answer a lot of questions we've had the back of our minds. Perhaps we knew the answers but were hoping they weren't right. At any rate we can stop sitting on our hands and get busy doing something about it. You can put me on record for this that I'm not sitting on this side of the ocean any longer than I have to if you have to stay over there for your minimum of eight months or maximum of one year. It sounds like an eon even after all the waiting I've done.

We're stopped right now with the darn State Department ruling but we're hoping that they may lift it after VE Day. The ruling, as you no doubt know is that you can't be sent to the same country or same theatre of war that your husband is in. The reason, because it isn't fair to the other wives of GIs. That I can be very selfish about.

I'm not being bitter, darling, or getting upset over it. We'll just have to go on as we have. Take things as they come along. I know full well that we have every right to be humble and grateful for the fact that you are here and well and all in one piece, that you haven't seen too much combat and if it means another year rather than a trip to the Pacific, I'll take the year of waiting if it comes to that. In the meantime I'm either going to find the opportunity or make one in order that I can get over.

I think I'll be smart to stay with Standard Oil Company even though it doesn't pay as much as I'd like, because they have an office in Paris and plan to resume operations there very soon. The president of that company that has the office there is also president of the branch that I'm working for and his offices are in the same building. He comes in the office often to see how the auditors are making out... an Englishman. I will have to have some kind of reason to get over in order to get a visa. If I'd only have a letter from them saying that I would be hired when I got over... that is if they wouldn't send me direct... pay my passage, etc., perhaps the other could be arranged. The fact that Pop was a forty year man carried a lot of weight when I filled out my application there. I had to put down if I had any relatives working for the company. They were quite impressed. Anyway, it's an iron in the fire.

We heard through Marg, but I told you that the other night that we knew you were either in Paris or on your way there. The Nice deal sounds fine. I think I'd like that lots better than your being in Germany. Nice is right on the Riviera... sounds wonderful.

We didn't discuss the plans with Marg. I think she likes to pump us anyway to see what you and Benny write to us and she just gives us little bits of information that she wants us to have... no more, no less. I know it's awfully silly and perhaps a little small but I couldn't help but notice. The last time you wrote to her, she brought the letter here and let me read it. Last night she mentioned she had a letter from you and that you said for her to tell me that you missed me. I said, did he have any news, and she casually said no, and that's all there was to it. Don't think anything about it... shouldn't have mentioned it. Guess I'm just jealous of your other women. Teasing you now, hon. Don't take me seriously.

I'm relieved, however, to know that there isn't a Pacific edition upcoming as yet. That's a big load off my mind. I always liked MacArthur anyway. Now he's my boy.

Bud wrote Marg and told her that if any more could be written in on the contract he'd ask for Benny, Bob and you.

I'm a bit afraid of the movie deal. If it should go through and you should come home it would only be for a few months and if the war was over in Europe you might be apt to be thrown into a replacement depot instead of being send back and heaven only knows where you'd end up. I'm looking at the blackest point of view I know but then you don't get disappointed as often when you do that.

You will know by know that Jane was being alerted for VE Day, not a trip to the ETO. That guy she works for could be a big aid in helping her get over but he isn't the type that would lend a helping hand. Darn.

I am not going to get discouraged. Something good must come out of all this. I don't know what but we just don't go on and on and then some more. Maybe I'm asking for miracles but one way or another we'll be together. Don't worry about me, hon. We'll find a way.

The part that worries me is that it might take a big chunk out of the money he have to live over there because maybe between the two of us we couldn't cope with the high prices but I couldn't care less. Money is sort of minor now. We're spending the best years of our lives apart and whatever it costs I'll dig it up from somewhere.

I suppose I should be very practical and sit back those months and get some sort of a home ready for us but I don't feel very practical now.

I loved the letter written only six days ago. You were so full of your work and so happy you'd done a good job. I'm awfully proud of you. It's times like these especially when I want you to be near so you can come and tell me about them instead of having to wait six days to get the news to me. It all sounded so exciting. I full well know how the telephone call giving you the news of the president's death must have affected you. It was something of a shock. You were right on the beam, getting everything out. I understand the Rome edition had quite a spread at the very earliest hour. They go to press pretty late, though. The bureau here was wondering how fast you people got the news and how it was treated. In the conversation about the Rome edition the other night, Gibson said that it might have been for the local papers only and the early editions that went to the front, of course, wouldn't carry it until the next day. I'm almost glad David had an ailment and Larsen left to give you the whole field to swing in. We were expecting the VE day news any hour of the day or night but now I think it will be a little while yet. NBC says it won't be until June. They've been paying for a direct wire for weeks to the Astor roof overlooking Times Square to get the reaction of the crowds, they've been expecting it so often. I don't pay any attention to the reports any longer. When it comes it'll come and that's that. You people must be in a state, too. I can just imagine after getting this letter, but I can tell you you're in your glory and that's good. I'm happy because I know you are.

I'll even forgive you for not reading my letters. However, I didn't give Jane a kiss for you. After all, Mr. K., you are married nowadays and I'm particular who you're going to kiss, even Jane. Do you mind? You sound almost as if I'd have to be around to sew your buttons back on. They're probably lying around somewhere.

I went over to 195 tonight. No one was there but Bette. Pop was working, the baby asleep and El out visiting. So Bette and I had a chat. Hold your hat, hon. Your baby sister is in love, with the sailor I mentioned a few letters back. He's quite a nice guy... has a business of his own in Chicago that he's bought since he's in the service, a restaurant that a married sister is operating for him. Bette is all starry-eyed and this seems to be it. He just shipped out and won't be home for a year so I guess this will be the test. I liked the looks of him very much. Name is Don Benson and he's a petty officer due to be made a chief.

It's very late and Jane is saying her prayers so that's a sign I'd better stop this pounding. I'll be back with more tomorrow night. Didn't half say what I wanted to. Your wife is getting talkative in her old age. I miss you so, want you so and love you so. Keep well and don't be worrying about Mrs. K.

She's doing all right. Just love me lots forever and ever.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, Mrs. K.

April 19, 1945—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

Do you know what I'm going to do tomorrow? I'm going to take you for a walk along the Champs Elysees to the Place de la Concorde and then into the Tuileries Gardens where we can sit in the park and make lots of love. I know I'm going to do it because I'm sure it will be as beautiful as it has been for the last two days and I want to sit down and have a letter-date with you in a place where I can picture the roses in my angel's cheeks.

Today I changed my opinion of Paris to a more favorable one than I had a few months ago. But, the opinion only concerns the appearance of Paris. It's beautiful, hon. I still don't care for the way of life nor for the office here. Of course, the people look much better in the spring than they do in the winter and there is a lot of color to the passing parade along the Champs.

I stopped in the office long enough to talk with Col. Goodfriend about what I am supposed to do in Germany and the word is that I was asked for especially by Capt. Schouman, who will be editor (brass) and a guy named Rogosta, who will be managing editor. The latter was with the Mediterranean *Stars and Stripes* until we merged up here and has been managing editor at Nancy. Schouman was editor in London and Paris. They want me to be the No. 2 man, whatever that is, according to Goodfriend. So, I'll have to wait and see. Meanwhile, the four of us from Liege who are going to Pfungstadt are being ribbed unmercifully by those who are heading for Nice.

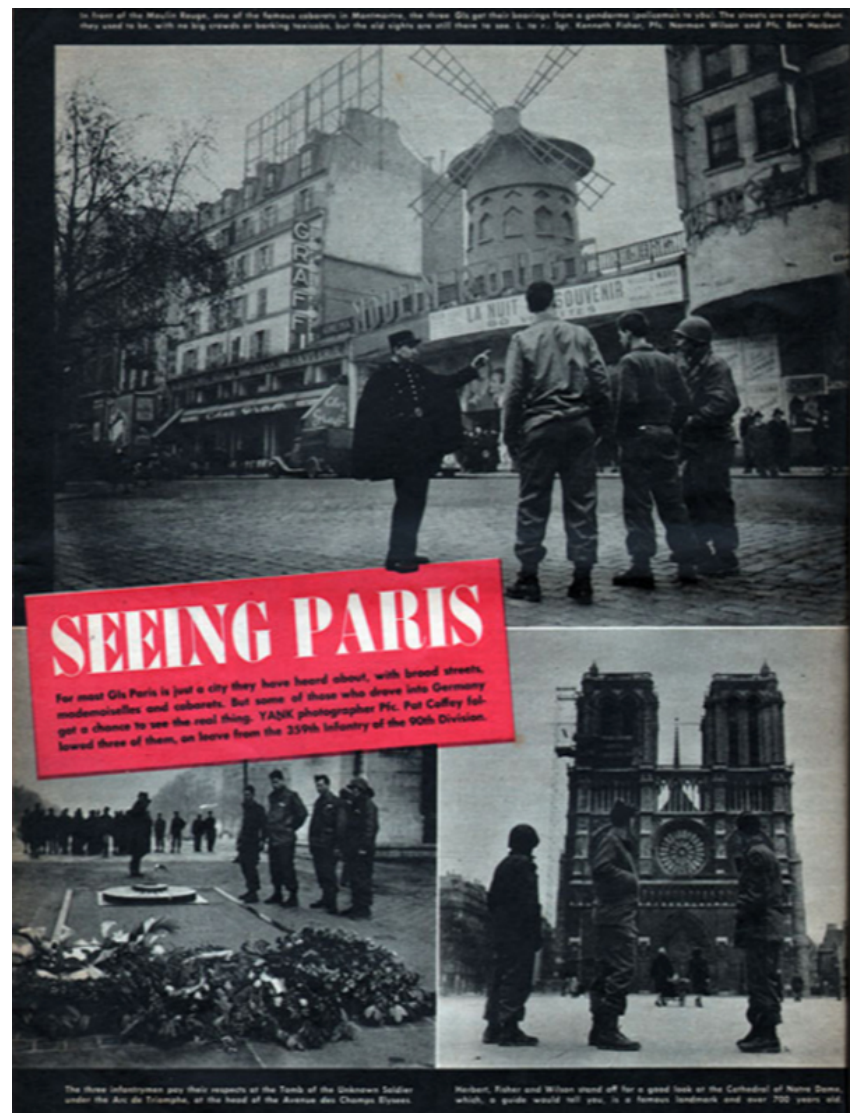


Photo spread from Yank Magazine, April 1945.



The report is that Nice is out of the world. Another Shangri-La. They are being billeted in a swell hotel, etc. Well, I can take it. Maybe I'd be happier some place where I can be alone with my thoughts of you instead of having a lot of good things and temptation in front of me.

After talking with Goodfriend I walked along the Champs, admiring the women (but not too much) because you can't help it. There are 50 women to one man, it seems, and women naturally dominate the parade. I sat in the park, soaking up sunshine and reading some New Yorkers. I stopped in two sidewalk cafes for some vin blanc, and in general felt thoroughly relaxed for the first time in ages. I'll be in bed early tonight... perhaps after I see a show. "Music for Millions" is showing in the big GI theater and the cast sounds good.

Last night I stayed up until 2:00 with Benny, Joe and a couple of the boys. We were in an "American bar" having a few drinks... not many. It was good to talk, lean back and listen, have a drink to play with. Now I know, for the first time I think, what relaxation can do for you. I feel now that I worked harder in Liege than in anywhere or at anything before, because I never felt so completely tired as I did when we finished up there. After a few days off and lots of sun, I'll be fixed fine for the next job.



Benny had an hour and a half talk with Col. Goodfriend last night regarding the reasons he was taken off the Nice edition. He got the reason and I know it didn't make him very happy because I'm sure he feels, as I do, that the "knife" was thrown by one of our so-called friends. But, he will stay in Paris with Joe and that will make both of them happy. I can take one of these assignments to the outlands much better than they can. I know that, now.

I have a wee bit of a cold sore in the corner of my nostril and I wish you were here to put some pommade on it. I know I can do it myself but I'd like to be babied now. Ever feel that way? Sure... me too, but only by you.

I'm thinking of you tonight... as beautiful as the day was... as lovely and bright as our love. Miss me, sweetheart.

Goodnight.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

PS: This has been done with a "Noiseless." I like 'em.

April 21, 1945—Paris

Hello angel,

This is by way of explaining a message I'm going to try and get through to Bill Spear and on to you. It will be brief because I have to leave in 30 minutes and there is still quite a bit a packing to do.

In my letter to you yesterday I told of getting ready to go to Germany. Well, the whole picture changed in less time than I can take to talk about it.

Jim Grad, to begin with, has been with Gen. Eisenhower for quite a few months. He is going home now.

Yesterday, the Col. called me into his office and asked me if I would like the job. It sounded good, inasmuch as I wasn't too keen about going to Germany and working with fellows I don't know, etc. So, I'm off to cover the ***** general. I'll meet Grad this afternoon at the general's forward headquarters.

This morning I saw the general's naval aide, Capt. Butcher, here in Paris. Also a couple of colonels connected with public relations. I believe I'll meet the boss himself before I'm at his headquarters very long.

The job boils down to this:

Rather than have an entourage of newsmen following the general around, one man is selected to represent the world press and radio in reporting the general's activities. Gen. Ike insisted that one man be from *Stars and Stripes*... that was Grad and now me.

Incidentally, I'm asking Grad to visit you when he gets home. He's a nice fellow, darling. You'll like him.

See you in a little while.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles



Supreme Commander Dwight Eisenhower, 1945.

April 22, 1945—New York

Darling,

I was sure I'd be back to see you long before this. The last time was Thursday night when I dashed off that rather lengthy letter on your trusty typewriter.

I'll bring you up to date on the last two days since we were together. Friday, I thought we'd spend a quiet evening at home, but it wasn't to be. When I came home at noon for lunch, Jane called and said Earl was still here, that he had a lot of excess baggage that consisted of liquor that he couldn't take over with him and he wouldn't be leaving until Wednesday so could they have a party here. There wasn't anything to do but say yes. He and Rita took Marg, Jane and I to dinner and then we all came down here just before the other Stars and Strippers started arriving. It was quite a gathering... people I hadn't seen or met before. Some I'd never heard of. I'll give you a guest list, though I can hardly call them guests: Bob Wood and spouse, Bill Spear and spouse, Gibson (don't know his first name) and wife, Bucknell and wife en route to the San Francisco Conference... he was here long enough for a scotch and soda... his wife came back after seeing him off to Washington... Russ Jones and his sister who are staying with the Bucknells, a character named Burgess Scott, a Yank man from Kentucky. Another character, Ralph Noel, arrived about midnight with two civilians more or less under the weather.

What a queer assortment of people. Jane and I were bartenders again. Funny, darling, they don't have the same spirit. There is definitely something lacking. I think Jane put her finger on a bit of it. She noted and this is quite right, they don't discuss the *Stars and Stripes* but only people on it, and the way they act... little incidents.. they don't offer anything constructive, whereas our discussions—you, Benny and Bob, Bud, too, were always thinking up new ideas for the paper. It's shameful the way they are abusing the New York bureau here. I'm so very grateful that I didn't go to work there, because I know I'd be out on my ear long before now. I'd tell them all off.

One point... they all pick up and go out to lunch together when there are enough of them there to take turns. They depend so much on ANS... hurts my pride in the paper. With the news the way it's going now there should be someone there twenty-four hours a day. That makes sense but there isn't. They say, oh, ANS will take over if anything happens. I know it isn't my place to even discuss it, but I'm afraid that they are going to spoil it for those who might come after because there is enough brass there to clamp down on them.

The outcome of the Charlie White deal was that he was restricted for thirty days and fined two-thirds of his month's salary, and after working eight hours a day for *Stars and Stripes* he must work three hours for ANS. I told you about that, didn't I? How he arrived back from Indiana in blue jeans with a bottle of corn whiskey in his hip pocket... drunk, of course. By the time he arrived, Major Pope had discovered he was AWOL. The bureau had covered for him as long as they could.

The party left us in an awful mess. They didn't have any manners at all. It's worse that all of the ones we had put together, the debris, I mean. It's going to be a long time before they use our apartment for another because I'm sure these don't mean anything to you or Benny.

I might add that Mrs. K. had three scotch and sodas during the course of the evening... oh, and two glasses of beer very late in the evening when the ice ran out and someone went out and bought a couple of containers of beer.

Sunday has become Monday and midnight. I'll have to explain why. After I finished the above paragraph, the phone rang from the lobby downstairs and it was Russ Jones and his sister wanting to know if we were in. Of course, we were and there was nothing to do but say yes. I like them much

better than I did the night of the party. He seems like a good guy. A bit cynical, but a good guy. His sister is a bit of a nitwit. I believe you and Benny met her in the bureau office last summer. She claims to have met you, anyway. Their call turned into dinner and then a show after, but we enjoyed having them. We saw a very wonderful movie, "Colonel Blimp," an adaptation of the English cartoon character. Perhaps you are familiar with him. It's a very wonderful movie, darling. Don't pass up an opportunity to see it.



I must go back to why I didn't write to you Saturday either. As you know, I don't work on Saturdays now. After viewing the debris from the party Friday night, there was nothing else to do but dig in like a good soldier, and that I did. Took me all morning and part of the afternoon. I cleaned cupboards, etc. I could just picture you looking into them and scolding us both for neglecting them for so long. I still have the picture of you cleaning them out when I moved in.

Kay Konzelman came in soon after Jane arrived from work. I was in the middle of a shower. We sat and chatted for a bit and then decided to go to Washington market to see what we could find in the way of food for the next couple of days. After getting down there, there was nothing in the way of meat. We bought a few vegetables and decided to have some shrimp, which I did, plus a few oysters, too. They were very good.

Marguerite was supposed to come in for the weekend but she never showed. We got tired of waiting for her and went to the corner movie and saw a good picture, "Keep Your Powder Dry," the one about the WAC's. Really amusing, with Lana Turner and a few others. I think that you'd like it.

We didn't get in 'til late after the movie and after having coffee, Kay made her way home and it turned out to be very late so we just fell into bed.

It's very late now, but if I fall in a heap, I'm going to finish this tonight.



Jane and I decided we have another Joe on our hands in Russ, at least until Buck comes back from the San Francisco Conference. I think he's an awfully lonely guy. He took both Jane and I to dinner. That's why we are so late. We spent hours in this place trying to get something to eat. We got into several arguments... both Jane and Russ "agin" me. I guess I have too much faith in people in general. I just can't think they way they do, hon. Do you mind? Didn't mind telling them so, either. I probably amuse them, but I don't care. I'm going to stick to my side.

This is the best... I've been saving it, darling. The bureau is such a wonderful deal, else I'd wait for days until I knew this, but as it is almost as soon as you know, I know. What I'm driving at is the news that you are going to take over Jim Grad's job at Eisenhower's headquarters. I think it's wonderful, because I feel it is probably what you wanted, to get a chance at something that was more or less field work. I'm happy if you are, so happy. I couldn't help but be awfully excited when Jane called this evening before she came home and told me. Marg had called her a bit earlier.

Immediately, I called Father John who hasn't heard from you in about six weeks. He was excited about it, too. I wish he'd stop in for a bit when he's over here. I wanted to read this last letter I received from you. It's such a wonderful letter. I love every bit of it, because it's you, darling, almost reaching out of the words and telling me all about it.

It will be wonderful to be in on the end of this mess at Eisenhower's headquarters. Perhaps I have the wrong concept of it all, but that's my idea now. Perhaps when I know a little more about it, it won't appear that way. According to Russ, anything that Eisenhower will want the press to know will be released through you. Is that the deal?

The news is so wonderful. I'm glad that the Russians are taking Berlin. Perhaps that will be a few less of our guys who will be slaughtered. I know it's for another reason but nevertheless, I imagine it will save a few lives. More and more of the atrocity stories are being published. They're hair-raising but we must make ourselves believe that they did happen and very likely are still happening where they haven't been stopped. Makes me all the more grateful that you are not in the thick of it. I know that it's a selfish outlook, but I can't help it. Just have to think that way.

To know that you have been safe and I hope and pray still will be with your new work gives me such a humble feeling. I want you so much but I know that I must be patient because we have been so fortunate, but it isn't easy.

Night after night... it seems hours that I lay there just thinking about you and the little time we had together. It comes over me when I'm doing something in the office, then I can let my mind... not let it, it does it automatically... wander back to those days. We have something so very wonderful to hang onto and keep us going, but can still get impatient at times... like tonight. I'm weary, it's very late and I'd love to have you gather me up and put me to bed. It will come soon, I'm sure, when we can be together without thought of goodbyes... only goodnights until morning. It will be so, so wonderful just being Mr. and Mrs. K., civilians.

This isn't a very good letter... very disjointed I know but I'm weary, as usual. I'll be back tomorrow, for sure this time. I'm not going to treat these people like company any more when they take up so much of our time. When I want to write a letter, I'm going to and that's all there is to it.

I'm all ready to hop in now, so you can really tuck me in. Kiss me nice and love me lots. I miss you so much. Would you like me to tell Gen'l. Ike what a nice guy you are? I could, you know. I love you.

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

April 23, 1945— "France"

Hello sweetheart,

I am certain you will be terribly confused by events of the past week. First, the closing in Liege. Second, the trip to Paris. Third, preparations for Germany. Fourth, sudden change to Gen. Eisenhower. And now... on the job. All in five days!

Darling, I hope to send you a daily diary, written since I started here, so you will be completely aware of my activities. I won't put much detail in these letters, except the highlights of the day, if any, supplemented with a lot of love-making.

I can get business-like with a diary, whereas I wouldn't like it in our "dates."

Jules Grad left for Paris this afternoon, leaving me on my own to take over.

I met Gen. Eisenhower this morning, by way of introducing me and saying goodbye to Jules.

Col. Gault ushered us into the General's office and left us there. We saluted, he shook hands, told us to sit down, then talked for five minutes or so. He said he was sorry but it looked as if he might be "stuck" here for a few days and would not make any "news."

The General told Jules he was glad to have had him with him, wished him luck and told me he'd be "seein'" me.

He was waiting for a call from Churchill, he said, so we shook hands again and made our exit.

The General looked tired around the eyes, but I expect he should.

You surely are wondering where I picked up this new scrawl, angel. The truth is, I'm writing in bed.

After Jules left, I decided it would be a good time to get rid of a head cold which has been bothering me for a week.

Col. Gault said there wouldn't be anything doing so I came to the hotel and got in bed. What's more, I'm going to stay here until morning.

That's the beauty of this job... when I check in with Col. Gault at 9:30 or 10:00 a.m. and he says "nothing doing," the rest of the day is mine. If something suddenly comes up I can always be reached at one of three places... the office, hotel or the apartment of the General's air crew.

The cold isn't anything bad, just one of those annoying things that make you sneeze and keeps you sniffing.

Expenses here are very reasonable, hon. Breakfast at the officers' mess costs only 20 cents, lunch and dinner, 40 cents. I'll get \$1.50 a day for meals while I'm here, payable at the end of the month.

Talking with Mickey McKeough, the General's driver and orderly, made me feel wounded today. He and a WAC, with whom he had been keeping company since the early days of the N. Africa campaign, were married about five months ago in Paris. The General had told him he would have to send his wife to another theatre if they married (the American Theatre) but it was all right with Mickey.

Mickey and I talked of weddings, wives, etc., me reminding him of the story I did on his wife and the other girls here just after they arrived in London from North Africa.

"You know, Chuck," says Mickey, "I'll bet I did something you didn't do."

I asked him what it was.

"I got married and became a prospective father in five days."

The story is that Mickey and his wife had a five-day honeymoon, after which she went to America. Before long, Mickey gets word he is going to be a father.

How do you like that?

Goodnight for now, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

April 24, 1945— "France"

Hello sweetheart,

This is the way it should be... us being together every night, if only by mail. It is our second night in succession... a record for my part after these last few months. And, I intend to maintain that record.

It is my fourth day here, but actually my first "on the job" inasmuch as it is the first day Jules is not here.

So far, it has been a holiday as far as work goes. I checked with Col. Gault at 9:30 this morning but he said there wouldn't be anything doing.

This afternoon I thought we would be in for a "quickie" when the air crew, Larry Hansen, Dick Underwood and "Snuffy" got a rush call to get to the airfield in 20 minutes. Leo and I were with them at the time. Leo called Col. Gault but the word was that it wasn't anything for us.

I hope you get the list of names I'm sending so you'll know these people when I talk of them. To make sure, I'll send another one with this.



With nothing else to do, I got a haircut, made a point of meeting other people at Headquarters, sat around the air crew's apartment and then went to a show tonight. The picture was "Winged Victory." I enjoy films like that, sweetheart, because they make me think of you and that's just about all I want to do anymore.

The pain we know so well is getting so it hurts all day long. There are times I need you, mostly for confidence. I know I can do the job but I'd still like you with me. When I think of representing the world press and radio in covering the Supreme Commander, maybe I should be a little tense. But, as it is, hon, I'm as loose as ashes. That's good!

According to a story by Andy in today's paper, he is on the verge of linking up with the Russians. Bud has been trying to get him back long enough to do his share of the book but apparently Andy is going to take his time about it.

Since I mentioned by having a cold last night, I know my little shack bunny is going to worry. Well, I'll give you an honest report. I still have some of the cold, in the head, but it feels better than it did last night. I was in bed for 18 hours in all and will be in again tonight at 9:30, a half-hour from now. I couldn't do better under your care, could I?

If you'll slide over to your house now, I'll tuck you in with those three kisses I haven't given you in ever so long.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

The Family

The Boss: D.D.E. [Dwight David Eisenhower]

Chief of Staff: Lt. Gen. Walter B. Smith

Kay: Lt. Kay Summersby, WAC secretary to the boss

Nana: Nana Rae, chief clerk and Scottish-born WAC in the office

Sue & Chick: two WACs in the office

Leo: Lt. Leo Moore, the boss's photographer with whom I live and work



Kay Summersby.

Col. Gault: military assistant to the general. British and with the general since North Africa

Col. Lee: American military aide to the general

Capt. Butcher: Naval aide and right hand man to the boss

Mickey: Mickey McKeough, driver and orderly to the general

Larry: Maj. Larry Hansen, 27-year old pilot of the general's plane

Dick: Capt. Dick Underwood, co-pilot

Snuffy: navigator

Jell: Maj. Jell, Gen. Smith's pilot

April 26, 1945—New York

Darling,

Ah, at long last... A week now since I had been blessed with a bit of your particular kind of heaven but two arrived today just in time to keep my chin from dragging. By this time you should know that I know you are bunking with Ike. Marg reports that your first story came over the U.P. wires today and she was going to snag it to bring home, but Bill Spear very officiously took it off her and sent it directly to you. Don't know what he thinks you are going to do with it but send it right back to me. That's a bit silly, don't you think? Marg says the next time she'll hit him over the head.

This is amusing, hon. Spear is all ready to come back again. Seems he's upset his wife's even plane of living. She had to leave a good job in Washington, etc., etc., and some more. Pardon me, hon, but you come home and just upset me all you like. I feel as if perhaps we don't live right or something. Maybe we're wrong. I know something makes me awfully mad when I think how some people are abusing something as wonderful as being able to be together.

A little ray of light is shining in what has become a dark cloud. In last night's Journal American (I know it's undependable) it stated that the War Department was thinking very seriously of releasing those men who have been in uniform four years or longer. Doesn't it sound super wonderful? I know... don't get excited. I don't any more. Sometimes I wish I could get excited over something. It isn't right to feel this way, I know, because we have been so lucky, but you can't be all sweetness and light all the time, can you?

I'm so happy that you were able to have a few days' rest in Paris and it sounds heavenly. I'd love to come along and sit down beside you in the park, look over your shoulder while you read the New Yorker. It must have been lovely, darling, as lovely as I felt looking out over the Hudson a few Saturdays ago at the Cloisters or sitting on the pier along the East River... our walks in the Village, the daylight hours. It isn't very good, is it, hon, to be so lonely... to want to be with someone so much. It's good, I guess, it has to be good, that we can be so lonely while we're so far apart. That makes sense if nothing else does.

I'm worried about the cold sore. You must have had another cold or did you eat something that didn't agree with you? Take good care of yourself and keep well. You sounded glad that Liege was over. I glad, too, especially since your new assignment is so much better than Liege or Pfungstadt.

I'm sorry about Benny. Was it Bud's fault or Bob's? Your letter wasn't very clear. I know, though, you didn't want to mention names. Bud very likely wanted the position in Nice and used his own ways of getting it, else Bob wanted Benny to work with him to assure him of his position, knowing how hard Benny works. It's too bad that he seems to be in the middle all the time when he is so wrapped up in his work and it pretty good at it. I'm glad you have more or less stayed out of it all. Works out much better than way. Jane has stayed so upset about it all. I hope Benny hasn't exaggerated it too much in his letters and that she isn't doing a lot of worrying for nothing. She's afraid, now, that in the event of VE Day, Goodfriend will decide he can do without those who have caused him any trouble and Benny will find himself really in the middle of a replacement depot or something. Time will tell, but I rather doubt that Benny's post-war plans will be found in the infantry. He's been in too long and has proved himself on the paper. Too many guys would back him up, I hope.

We're all very domestic tonight. Marg is just a few feet away doing some ironing. Jane has been mending and I've been fixing our snap shot album, along with a few other odds and ends. Jane is busy now with a letter. I think we'd probably be a lot better off if he got a larger apartment and all three of us lived together. It isn't going to be much fun for Marg in the hotel room all summer.

I found a rather nice album... not what I wanted but they have been so scarce. No one seems to have the kind I wanted. Anyway, I have all our honeymoon pictures, West Point, etc., and a few others. You will probably scold me when you see what I've done, but it's done and it'll just have to stay now. You'll see when you come home. I'm not going to tell you, so there. I have an idea about what to do with your letters... have to see first if it will work. I sort of like it myself, but we'll see.

I did something today that I hope won't displease you. Mr. Walton, my boss, took me to lunch today. I'll tell you how it all came about. I was telling him about Russ, Jane and I going to this Spanish restaurant not too far away from here and how we had chicken, clams and shrimp all cooked in rice... really good, too. It seems he spent quite a bit of time in South America and Cuba for Standard Oil and was interested. Called the dish by its proper Spanish name and wanted to know if he could go with me there to lunch some time. I couldn't see how I could get out of it gracefully, hon. I'm not very good at things like that... don't know why. So we had lunch. He's a nice old guy, not a wolf or anything like that. He was so nice when Jane was sick, letting me take so much time off when I'd only been there a short time. Do you mind very much?

Jane has received two cables from Benny in the past week. He was upset about her. Today a long-awaited letter arrived with yours, and one for her from Joe, too. Poor Joe, I've neglected him shamefully. Haven't answered his letter yet. I hope he's a little happier now that he's with Benny. He was so unhappy.

By now, you know that the hundred dollars arrived. About the other money.. please, think it over carefully before you take a chance. I don't know too much about the setup but Russ says this

Blackman guy... think that's his name... who has been handling the deal is "bad medicine," to quote his words. [Have no more information on "the deal."]

Did you like "Music for Millions?" I saw it. Wasn't too bad. I like Jimmy Durante and of course José Iturbi, and the little girl was cute. It must seem good to go to a movie. You haven't mentioned seeing one in so long. I'm sure you haven't been going.

Even if you didn't go to Pfungstadt, I'm glad they were so anxious to have you. Must have liked your work very much at Liege and especially when you had it to yourself. They said in the bureau here that it was better than the Paris edition for covering the president's death. See, darling, you can do it. Takes a lot out of you, I know, but it must have given you a good feeling to know that it could be done and that you could do it and do it well. Your letter about it that I got last week still makes me glow with pride. I knew I must have reason to be proud because otherwise you wouldn't have glowed so in your letter. You did feel so good.

It must have been good to be with the old gang again to mull over things in a bar. As I've said before I'm so happy for the break you received... the few days in Paris you had. With your new work, will you be hitting Paris often? I'm so anxious to get a letter bout it, but I'll have to be patient. In Benny's letter to Jane, he mentioned that you had applied for the assignment. You didn't tell me that. I know you wanted to have it in the bag before you told me. I don't mind being in suspense... so used to it now that any other way wouldn't be right.

Mrs. Price is sitting opposite me here in the alcove scratching out a letter to you. Seems she's been owing you one, so she decided to do it just like that. I should write to Benny now and then, but I never seem to get around to doing it.

This is the first time since Monday, I believe. Let's see, Marg came over Tuesday night and stayed late. Didn't get to write then because we all sat around and chatted. Last night I got involved in the laundry and a book I got from the lending library. Couldn't put the darn thing down. "Valley of Decision," the story of the building of Pittsburgh and the steel industry. An epic but really holds your interest. They have made a movie that has been released because it's due at Radio City before long. Ingrid Bergman plays the lead. Should make a pretty swell one, too.

Marg has been reading "Forever Amber." She brought it along tonight and read some of it. Seems you haven't read anything 'til you've read that. Amber is quite a gal, I've hear. Jane read it and for two days I couldn't get a word out of her. She was literally buried between the covers. I haven't gotten around to reading it. Seems it's very much on the trashy side.

Really, hon, I've rattled on a great length. I've missed you so. Last night, when I finally did get to bed, I lay a long time just thinking, wondering how much longer. It's over five months. Soon it will be six. I know I'd better make up my mind that it will be awhile unless a miracle will happen and I can find a way to get over or you can come home. I'll baby you so much, you'll be spoiled terribly, but I'll love it. I'm afraid I'll be wrapped right around your little finger and all you'll have to do is say, "jump," and I will. I'll be so happy to have you back for keeps. Jane just insisted that I censor her letter to you. That's no fun. She's talking through her hat. All I did was take her temperature

and be on hand when the medicine was due and see that she had dry pajamas all the time. She perspired so with the fever.

Darling, go on missing me and being so lonely. Guess I'd die if you weren't. Take good care of yourself. You're pretty special, Mr. K.

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

April 26, 1945— "France"

Hello sweetheart,

I missed a date last night, but here I am back again for the third time in four nights and it's ever so nice just looking at you, darling, and making love to you. You are probably wondering about the "France" dateline. I live on my letters now. It is because this place, Gen. Eisenhower's forward headquarters, is strictly on the "stop" list as far as location is concerned. So, you will have to be satisfied with a guess until it can be revealed.

I missed last night's date, I guess, because I worked for a change. Maybe it was the shock of writing a story. I could scarcely remember when I wrote the last one. The group of senators and members of the House of Representatives who are over here to see evidence of German atrocities reported to the General yesterday and I sat in on the hour-long conference.



Members of the Congressional group investigating Nazi prison camp atrocities arrive at the Reims, France airport just in time to see 20 captured German generals being loaded into a C47. Charles is second from left, in the background. April 1945.

Today, 18 newspaper publishers and editors, here for the same purpose, came in and it was another conference.

Tomorrow the International war Crimes Commission will be here.

My routine is to call in the story to the office, then put it on the HQ teletype here, which gets it to press HQ in Paris for distribution all over the world.

You are likely to see my stories in the New York papers from time to tome, some perhaps with a byline. If they don't have a byline, you will be able to recognize them with a dateline of "Supreme Headquarters Forward CP" or "With Gen. Eisenhower's Forward CP." The "CP" part of it is "Command Post."

There is a very bad feature about this job, angel. I have to wait so damn long for mail. I usually talk with Benny every day by phone and he tells me I have "letters, letters and more letters." I don't dare change my address, but will continue to have it sent to the office and hope to get it here some way.

There is a colonel in Paris who is coming up here Saturday and I'm going to have Benny send the mail over to him. Meanwhile, Ben is saving it for me.

He told me today that he had written to you, thanking you for taking care of Jane. I hadn't said anything to him so Jane must have told him what a good girl you are. I could tell him more than that but I'll save it for your ears.

There were more stars around here today, hon, than there are in the sky. It's commonplace to rub elbows, practically any day, with Gen. Doolittle, Gen. Spaatz, Gen. Smith, Gen. Clay, Gen. Lear... who may not sound like much but they're top men in the war.

It's funny... tonight I went over to the officers' club and sat at a table with three majors, two captains and three first lieutenants. One of the majors was Larry Hansen and the other Gen. Smith's pilot.

Everybody calls everybody else by first names. Hansen calls me, "Chuck." Can you imagine? Do you think you'll ever call me that... with love in your eyes?

I'll be back tomorrow, sweetheart, unless the unexpected occurs.

All the best to Jane.

And, I love you so much, Mrs. Kiley.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

April 28, 1945— "France"

Hello sweetheart,

Instead of awakening you at this time of day (4:00 a.m. Sunday) I should be quietly tip-toeing through the room and going to bed without disturbing you.

I have this dated “Saturday” although it is actually Sunday morning. But, since I wasn’t able to see you on our date night, I thought it would be OK.

There has been more than a little excitement around here for the last few hours and I don’t feel ready to go to sleep yet. That is why I hoped you wouldn’t mind if I awakened you and asked you to talk with me for a bit.

I am afraid I have been the cause of the excitement, too. Not the direct cause, but I had something to do with it.

We were at the air crew’s apartment last night (Saturday) playing cards and talking. At 10 o’clock, I was getting ready to leave and “see” you before I retired.

At that moment, Paris called to give me word that they had an idea something big might break soon and to “stand by.” I waited until 2:30 a.m. and decided it was too late for anything to happen tonight. As soon as I got home, Dick Underwood (co-pilot of the general’s plane) came rushing over in a Jeep to get me and Leo. He said Paris called and wanted me to call back immediately.

We came back to the apartment, I called Paris and Bob gave me the report that the Associated Press had quoted a “high official” at the San Francisco Conference as saying Germany had capitulated to the U.S., Britain and Russia. He said a call was trying to be put through to Bill Spear in N.Y.

My job, of course, was to see what the general knew about it.

It was going to be a delicate job, I knew... at 3:00 a.m.

Dick drove me first to HQ and nobody was around. Then we went to the general’s house. After convincing a couple of guards we were ok, we got Col. Gault. He brought us to the general who was just getting ready to retire. Generals, it seems, also keep late hours.

The General had not heard of this latest report, although he had heard an earlier one that Himmler had “reportedly” offered to surrender to the U.S. and Britain.

Frankly, darling, he was a little perplexed. I can see how he wouldn’t have had word so quickly since the report originated in San Francisco and not here.

Thinking over the situation, he said he didn’t believe it, although it “would be an ironic climax to this war if it was over and I didn’t know about it.”

His aide put through a call to 10 Downing St. in London and received the reply that it had heard of the report but did not know of the surrender.

The general thanked me for bringing the news to him and said I could quote him as saying he had received no report of any surrender.

When I called Bob back, he said they had been talking to New York by phone and learned that Pres. Truman also had denied the report of surrender.



President Truman at press conference denying the peace rumor. April 18, 1945.

Personally, I can't figure it out. Associated Press would not start a wild rumor, I'm sure. It quoted the "high official" in San Francisco as saying Sec. Stettinius [U.S. Secretary of State] had received word from Washington about it.

There also were reports that newspapers in the U.S. had used the story of "Nazis Quit."

In Paris, the word got around and everybody was celebrating peace.

I do know this, however, that at 3:00 o'clock this morning, the man who should know, Gen. Eisenhower, did not know anything about it.

And, I also feel that the "big people" who circulate these stories without them being official ought to be hung. We were ready to start a wild celebration of our own until it all turned out to be nothing more than a rumor.

All I could think of was that soon, however long it would be, you and I would be in each other's arms again where we belong. Now, I have to go to bed and just pray something official will happen, but quick.

I hope you didn't mind being awakened, angel. But, I had to talk with someone, and I felt you wouldn't mind. How about me making some hot chocolate and toast for us now? We can sit in the kitchen and let me see how beautiful you are in the middle of the night.

And, if you are a good girl, I'll let you come over to my house for awhile.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

April 28, 1945—New York

My dearest,

I'm so grateful that we're alone that I can hardly contain myself. I sincerely hope that it will be that way for awhile, too... that I'm in bed before anyone else comes. Does that sound strange? Too many people, I guess.

Let's see, I haven't been with you since Thursday night and this in Sunday. I'll pick up Friday and go from there.

I met Jane, Marg and Russ after work and Bill Gibson happened along with us. We stopped in the Little Campus and had a drink and of course Gibson was there. He's trying to get a divorce. We stayed there about an hour or a bit longer and then proceeding to the seafood restaurant a few blocks toward Grand Central and had dinner. It was late when we left there and I thought for sure they would leave us and we could go home but, no, they insisted on going to the Commodore bar so there we were 'til the curfew and they all came home. I don't know what time it was when they left. Marg stayed with us. Jane had an appointment in the morning so she left about ten and I cleaned the apartment. Marg and Russ were to come to dinner... that would be last night.

Jane and I went shopping for the week over to the A&P... bought out the place, but we decided it would be a good idea so we wouldn't have to make so many trips downstairs to the deli and we really save a little buying there. Russ and Marg came in about six or a bit after, and we all sat around for quite a bit. Didn't have supper 'till after eight or so... waffles. I wish we'd had the waffle iron when you and Benny were here. In the middle of supper we heard the surrender communique. We couldn't believe it, and it's a good thing, though we all did get excited in spite of ourselves. We waited and waited for some confirmation, then a Lt. Gebbie (not sure that is the spelling, but it sounds like that) from ANS called and said he had just talked to Benny and how he sounded, etc. It seems everyone in Paris thought it was over but they couldn't get any confirmation so Benny called New York to see if they knew any more here. Isn't that like Benny, though? It sure brought you both very close, hon. We waited and waited... fact is, Russ didn't go to Bucknell's until four a.m. We were all nearly dead and everyone sort of catnapped in between news flashes. Finally, we gave up and went to bed. Marg stayed with us, of course. Russ left, us promising him that if anything broke we'd come down and wake him. This is wonderful... Russ called in about ten, an hour after we heard the news and no one was there representing the *Stars and Stripes*. What kind of a guy is that Bill Spear? He amazes me, but then who am I to judge? It won't matter to him, I'm sure, one way or the other, if it's over.

Russ is quite a character, a lonely one if I ever saw one. Can't understand his wanting to be with us, and I'm sure that he wouldn't if he didn't want to be. He told us last night that he'd never been lonelier in his life than he has since he's in New York. I imagine he probably left someone behind either in Paris or London. He has some strange ideas. You'd be amazed at our conversation... the three of us.

I wakened early and went to ten o'clock Mass and then over to 195 to get a breather from the *Stars and Stripes*. Didn't think I could take another day. I wanted to be around some normal people, namely 195. They are all fine and in the midst of spring cleaning. Pop took a week of his vacation and decorated the little room for Annice. You should see it. Nursery wallpaper and your bookcase made over into a closet for her. El has a small chest of drawers for her, and her rocker, with blue linoleum on the floor. El is busy doing her room, too, painting the woodwork white. I'm going to help her make slipcovers for her chair and cedar chest.

Bette is still going around starry-eyed, all joking. This seems to be it. She's really serious.

El has a strange feeling that Tom is coming home. Can't put her finger on it but the feeling is there, so she's sort of making preparations. It would be wonderful if the three of them could be together, but she still has the fear that he will go to the Pacific.

A girlfriend of El's, Kay Miller, was down today and she asked to be remembered to you.

One of your stories was in a Long Island paper with your byline. Joan O'Connor was over today, too, and was telling me. She's going to send it to me.

I'm wondering, if Eisenhower releases the statement that it's over, if you'll be the one that will receive it. Oh, darling, I hope it's soon... just has to be.

NBC called Jane last night and told her they thought it would break today but so far it hasn't. I hope they don't do this often. This is the second time, only last night was the worst.

Betty Hutton is singing "The Rocking Horse Ran Away." Remember how you liked that? A little bit before, they were singing, "Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby." I always think of you when I hear that. Just can't help it.

Did you ever have that feeling about the *Stars and Stripes* that you didn't want to hear it or be around it? I have as much loyalty as any of them but I know that if I had to be around Marg, Jane and Russ again today I'd have died. I'm so glad they aren't here now. That's not nice, is it, but I can't help it. It's probably not really them, but a combination of everything. I'll probably be fine and my old sweet self tomorrow but right now I don't think even you could put up with me.

I'll be getting a letter from you soon wanting to know if I've forgotten how to write. Been using your trusty typewriter quite a bit lately. I've been doing so much typing on this new job that my old speed has come back and I can just write as fast as I can think and it seems to come out easier. That's why you liked to write on it, yes. You were used to it and probably your thoughts came out better. And I had to be different and insist on the pen. It's just that I had so little of you and seeing your writing brought me closer to you. Getting a typewritten letter gave me almost the same feeling v-mail letters do, and that's not good, but I'm over that now.

Hearing the discussions I've heard in the last few months in our gatherings makes me wonder if I'm normal. I've never heard quite such ideas. They don't think I'm quite right when I want something as simple as a home and children, and most of all just you to be with, always. So many of them really want to stay over there after this is over.

What are your sentiments on that, darling? Certainly I don't want to tie you down because wherever we've be, home would be with you, and if you want to stay over there after, then that's what I want to do, too. Really, darling, I mean that. I'm just not writing it.

Your letter after you got over there made me believe you didn't want to stay over there, but perhaps you've changed your mind. I want you happy. Whatever it is and whatever you want to do is what I want.

Jane, Marg and I are going to see Katherine Cornell in “The Barretts of Wimpole Street” tomorrow night. Hope it’s good. Been one of the things I’ve always wanted to see on the stage and especially with Katherine Cornell. Brian Aherne plays Robert Browning.

Tuesday we are meeting Rita and her mother for dinner. Her mother goes back to Charleston Wednesday and wants to meet us before she goes back. Rita will remain, for how long I don’t know. She’s going to a doctor here and wants to finish her treatments, whatever they are, so we’ll see some more of her.

Darling, I couldn’t ever be more weary than I am now. I know it’s an old story but it was four-thirty before I hit the bed this morning and I was up again at nine-thirty, which doesn’t make for very many hours.



Katherine Cornell as Elizabeth Barrett Browning in “The Barretts of Wimpole Street.”

I have the sink full of clothes soaking that have to be rinsed out and hung up. I never could figure out whether I was awful dirty or awful clean because I always seem to have a laundry to do.

You wouldn’t like me tonight because I washed my hair and it’s all pinned up. You know last night when I got dressed, I knew I wasn’t going out so I just put a skirt and blouse on. My hair is getting long and that darn piece of hair in front, no matter how many pins I put in it always seems to want to fall in my face so I got tired last night and tied it back with a piece of blue ribbon I had in my drawer. Nearly cried while I was doing it because there you were sitting on the dresser smiling at me the way you do and I remember how you liked a blue ribbon in my hair. I still had it on this morning when I awakened.

I think I’ll go and finish my laundry and come back and let you tuck me in. Be right back. Kiss me nice, I’m all done now and ready to have you tuck me in. Jane called a few minutes ago from a bar. Seems she, Marg and Russ are having one for the road and she’ll be home soon. I’ll be asleep long before she gets here. I miss you so and love you so much. Please miss me lots and love me even more. Take good care of yourself, Mr. K. I’m so proud of you, darling.

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

PS: Thought you might like to have that ribbon I told you about.

April 30, 1945—New York

My darling,

A wonderful Monday. Your letter was waiting for me this morning so I read it as I walked to the post office to pick up the morning mail. This was what I wanted... to hear about your new “job,” or shall we call it a “position?” Gee, hon, I do believe you have the luck of the Irish. It sounds swell. Especially the daily diary. If Gen. Ike prompts something like that, he’s number one on my list. I was telling Jane tonight, Benny will be able to tell his grandchildren he captured 25 Germans and we can tell ours you covered Gen. Eisenhower. Your living conditions sound perfect, the hotel, officers’ mess, etc. I’m glad it’s still “France,” too. But I’m worried about your cold. I know when you go to bed that it must be a bad one. Please, hon, take good care of yourself. This weather is so changeable now. I wish I were there so I could rub your chest and make you comfortable.

Jim Grad’s father called today trying to learn when he was expected. Seems he’s to leave from England by boat this week or next. His father seemed surprised he’d come home now when the end is so near.

Your friend Mickey sounds nice. I remember reading about the wedding and soon after she arrived in the States. Hadn’t heard about the baby, however. I’m a wee bit jealous. Makes me feel inadequate or something. I’m sure that’s not the right word. Marg suggested maybe it happened before. Makes me wonder if anybody thinks anyone lives right. I’m more than ready to believe Mickey. It happens in the best of families. Where does this “Chuck” business come in? That’s a new one.

We all went to see “The Barretts of Wimpole Street” tonight, Marg, Jane and I. Katherine Cornell played Elizabeth B. Browning. I enjoyed it immensely even though I knew the story, of course. It’s the first play I’ve seen in New York. We used to get road shows at home. I remember I saw Eva Le Galienne and a few others some years back. Of course, we had to lose something. Jane lost one of her little ear clips. I think I liked them as much as she.

No more exciting news tonight but I feel sure it will happen very soon. The message from Benny said the phone call saved their neck. They were all ready to make a spread of it, that it was over when Benny decided to call and make certain.

The news came of Mussolini’s execution along with the others. That’s one down. The pictures are horrible. According to the news tonight, a [sergeant from] the *Stars and Stripes*, and Rita Hume, a [INS] news correspondent, I presume, were the first Americans in Milan.

Tonight’s latest said the news would be flashed from the White House as soon as it arrived. You can imagine how excited we all are, and yet still a bit wary to get too excited.

I’m in the dressing room and inches away, you are smiling at me. You’d laugh, hon, if you could see one of the pictures I have of you on my corner of the dresser, but it’s one of my favorites. I love it, so there it is. Do you mind if I love you an awful lot?

I tried to call Father John and tell him about the letter but the line was out of order so I'll try again tomorrow.

Darling, I neglected last night to tell you a bit of very important news I learned at 195. Uncle Frank McGurk [Ella Kiley's younger brother] is married and has been for six months to someone from Florida. Her name is Marie and that's all anyone seems to know about it. Eileen Slack's father received the news, I guess, from him. I understand they are friends.

It's late, nearly one, and I'd better be a good girl and let you tuck me in. I miss you so.

Remember now to be careful and take special care of you, Mr. K. Love me a lot, darling.

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

May 2, 1945— "France"

Morning sweetheart,

Surprised at such an early morning call? Well, it's 10 o'clock and time for all people to be up and enjoying this sunshine. I didn't expect to find you still in bed, lazy-like, but let me first kiss you good morning, straighten the blue ribbon in your hair, then sit beside you and talk awhile.

You must have had a nice rest because you look so beautiful and refreshed. Did you any any pleasant dreams? Hold still a second while I take that "sleeper" from the corner of your eye.

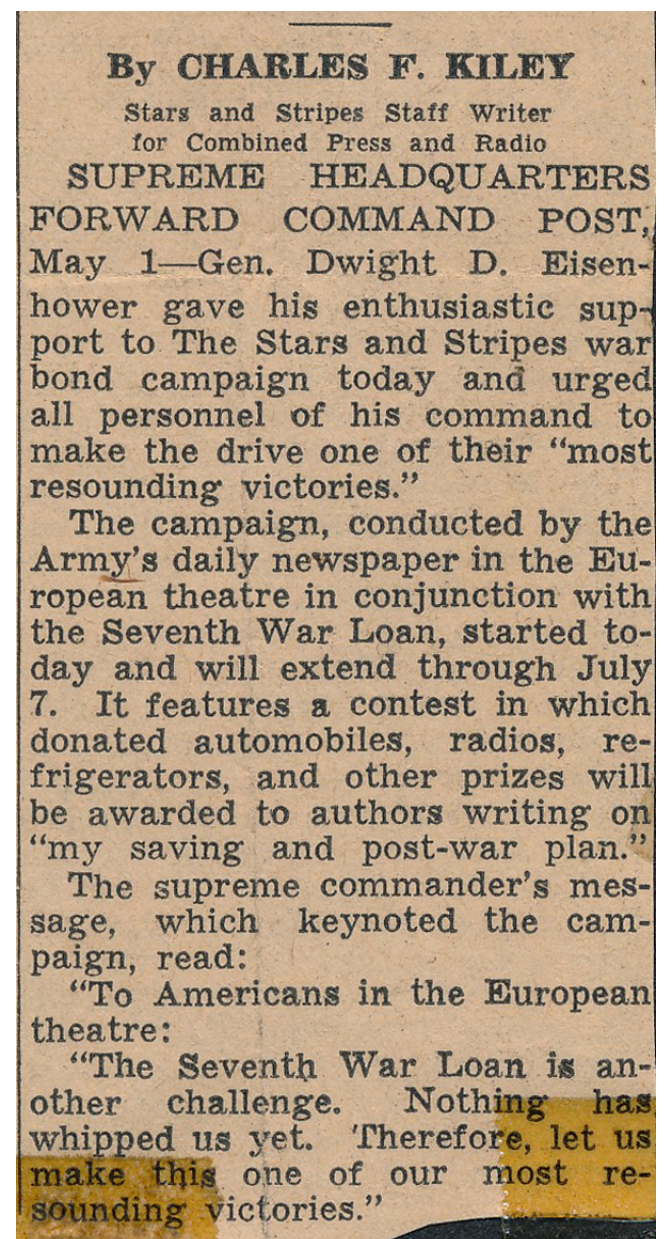
I can't stifle the urge to kiss you again, you look that sweet and lovely.

Earl arrived in Paris the other day. I spoke with him on the phone and after the usual greetings, he remarked, "You sure have one of the sweetest girls in the world."

Of course, that description came after I asked him, rather breathlessly, how you were and if he had any message for me.

He said he was going up to the Ninth Army and will stop here and stay overnight with me on the way up. I am expecting him this evening, together with mail for two weeks and the things he brought over for me.

Now that I have the money I asked for I don't know what to do with it. I could have "used" it in Liege but there isn't any possibility of me doing anything with it here.



*Story in The New York Times from
May 2, 1945.*

I'll be moving in about three weeks, according to plans, to the place I went to on my first mission that will be the new HQ. Perhaps I can do something with the money there. Otherwise, I'll just hold it for the time being. If you need it, darling, please let me know and I'll send it back immediately.

According to Benny, Earl will be bringing me a "stack" of mail, including "beaucoup" from you. Gosh, I've been on the verge of a fit these last 10 days or so. Meanwhile, starting tomorrow I'll be getting mail every day. I'm having mine sent up with the stuff that comes to the *Stars and Stripes* circulation office here. I'm so terribly anxious to have your mail, angel.

There hasn't been much for me to do since my "middle of the night" interview with the General.



An "extra" from *The Stars and Stripes*, May 2, 1945.

Last night we heard by radio of Hitler's reported death and this morning the report is that von Rundstadt has been captured.

The events of the last week or so have been amazing. Everything happening at once.

1. The Russians in Berlin.
2. The Russo-American linkup
3. Himmler's surrender offer
4. The reported end of the war
5. Mussolini's death
6. Hitler's reported death and succession by Adm. Doenitz.
7. Capture of von Rundstadt.

What next?

All I can do is stay close to HQ, in case something involving the General happens. In that event all I can do is hope it won't be so "top secret" that I'll be left behind. Because I'm almost constantly in the company of the air crew, or at the office, I'm sure I'll be aware of anything upcoming but I can only hope I'll go along, whatever it is.

And that about finishes our early-morning "tete-a-tete." You now have my permission, after I muss you up a little more with a dozen gloppy kisses, to arise, shower and dress.

I'll be back tonight, if I can break away from Earl.

'Bye sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

May 2, 1945—New York

Hello, Mr. K.,

Is your snuffle better? I hope so and how's the cold sore? I hope you are feeling good, darling. I worry more about your catching something awful than anything else because there is so much over there to catch. I know I'm an old worry-wart but can't help it.

You would have been amused at us tonight. We're so domestic. I have a dress nearly finished and Mrs. Price started one that amazes me. Don't know how long she'll last cause it takes patience to sew. Mrs. Rooney did her laundry and read "Amber." She decided to stay so now she and Jane are in bed and asleep. I'm the night-hawk. Just had to be with you a little while.

The news has me so excited I'm not sure whether I'm coming or going. So much has happened. Confirmation of Hitler's death and Goebbels. Surrender of all troops in Italy and Austria and possibly Holland, Berlin's capture... almost more than you can take in and you're in the center of anything that will break now. It's almost unbelievable that the end is so near. They were to get a holiday if VE Day... if, I mean when, but they cancelled the order today and I'm glad. I'd feel guilty having a day off when we were till fighting in other parts of the world, wouldn't you?

Jane has a new job at Newsweek. Seems Mr. Brooks just got to be too much for her. I was surprised because she really liked her work, but he expected an awful lot out of the ordinary from Jane. She took it longer than I thought she would. I thought she'd really made the best of it when she announced one night last week she was quitting. She's secretary to the advertising research director temporarily until there is an opening in the editorial department.

We were discussing postwar plans and we decided it would be nice if the four of us could be near each other for a while as civilians, that the adjustment would probably be easier, because there really is going to be one I think, perhaps not as much for you as others. It's strange how unlike Jane and I are. She says she can't see her and Benny settled down with a home and children and Benny coming home every night from work... that that isn't for her. I wonder what she expects out of life. I've noticed in living with Jane that she wants to do the unexpected in everything. She doesn't want to be part of a pattern in anything, clothes, work... anything that's out of the ordinary, that's what she wants. Maybe it's good to be like that, I don't know. A little of it, yes. Who wants to be like everyone else? But not to the extreme she goes to. I'm not criticizing her, it's just my observation. She's a strange gal.

No more mail this week since the one I received Monday written the twenty-third. The General must be keeping you busy.

I'm so glad you are out of the Paris mess, because it is a mess again, according to Benny's letters this week and one from Joe. I guess it was Bud who snafu'd Benny's assignment in Nice. It's too bad Joe told Marg more about it than Benny told Jane. He asked Joe to go to Nice but Joe reneged on the idea... told him no, very formally. He's on the news service with Benny and Bob as well as Larsen and a few others. Benny isn't very happy doing it. Let's hope something breaks and you'll be able to come home.

This gets me with all the news that's breaking, *Stars and Stripes* still does its eight hours a day and goes home. Isn't that delightful? If it were me, you wouldn't be able to tear me away for fear I'd miss something. ANS will take over if anything happens.

According to plan, now Jane and I are to go to Marg for the weekend in the country... sounds wonderful.

I hope Earl has met up with you by this time and the money is in your hands.

We didn't see Rita and her mother last night. The weather was right out of this world and I didn't feel too much like it anyway so we stayed home and washed and and ironed and I sewed a little.

I talked to El last night. She's only received eleven letters from Tom. It's so cold up there now that you can't stay outside more than five minutes at a time. He's still on the boat and has to be out practically all the time, poor guy. What an awful place to be in.

You have such nice eyes, hon. I love the way they look at me and such a cute grin. I wish I knew what I did to rate being Mrs. K.

I'm sort of strange-looking, what with these p.j.s that keep getting bigger on me all the time and my hair pinned up. You wouldn't like me, I'm afraid. I used to wonder what you thought, leaning on the chest while I pinned my hair up. You'd rest your chin on your hand and watch me. Funny, the things you bring out of your memory.

My present job will be over the middle of June. Think I'll get another temporary job until I see what happens. If you should come I'd want to be off for awhile just to be Mrs. K. Would you mind? Then I'll find another job somewhere. Maybe by that time we'll know something a little more definite about what they are going to do with you. Every day we get a new report.

Mrs. K. is sleepy, hon, as usual, but she has every right to be because it's awfully late. With your new job, do you have to keep such later hours? Or do we have our dates earlier in the evening?

Darling, I miss you so... guess I'll never quite get over that. Aren't you glad? Tuck me in now, dearest, and love me lots. Please, be careful and keep well. I love you with all my being.

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

May 3, 1945— "France"

Hello sweetheart

This is going to be what we have called a "longie," which explains my reverting to the typewriter. I'm sure I would have to write five letters, with my pen, in order to get everything said that is in my mind and heart.

Earl came up here yesterday with my mail, among other things. There was enough from you, along, my angel dearest, for me to spend two and half hours reading and re-reading it.

Oh, darling, it isn't possible for me to really explain or describe what those letters meant to me. At intervals I was grinning at you, laughing, wrinkling my forehead, glowing, lifting my eyebrows in surprise... but loving and adoring you every second.

There also were letters from El, Bette, Bill Spear, Dot, my cousin Joan (Denver), the Journal, Father John. There must have been a couple of more but I can't recall them now.

Your ever so big chunks of heaven were those of April 8, 10, two on the 15th, 14, 16 and 18.

First, let me pass on what Earl reported (after delivering the t-shirts and the other item about which you were so worried).

He said I should be thankful the rest of my life to have you as my wife. Mind you, I'm just passing on one man's opinion, although I more than agreed with everything he said about you. There was so much more but I would have been disappointed if he had not had the reaction about you.

And, while I'm on the subject of Earl... hon, please forgive me for not telling you about the stuff he brought back. I was positive I had written to you when I wrote to him, explaining the setup. He said you knew nothing about it and your letters received yesterday bore out his statement. I have the stuff now and you will be hearing from me from time to time about it. It's impossible for me to put it all in one letter, if you get what I mean.

He told me how you cared for Jane. Benny did, too. I only hope you didn't impair your own health, sweetheart. And, I'm sure you didn't, although you must have had several trying days and nights. I'm certain, in your place, I would have done the same thing. It's your way, and I love you so much for it.

One thing that is bothering me. I can't recall your acknowledging the \$100 money order I sent from Liege a long time ago, it seems. I know my memory is failing but could you give me a report on it again, if you haven't already?

Back to Jane. I haven't said anything to Benny about Jane's illness, other than that comment on what he told me. The day I arrived back in Paris he had received word of the strep throat and was more than a little disturbed. If he got excited in his letters to her it was because of something he heard from other sources and not from me.

About Charlie White... well, you were able to form your own opinion, I guess. Darn shame, because, despite his appearance and action he has a sharp mind, if he would use it. Like Morrow, I know he can because he didn't touch a drop, not even beer, for several months in Paris.

Another thing you reported was that people had heard that Bud was wounded. Well, perhaps I should have been interested in his limp and his stories but to be frank I can't recall having read them. I must have because we ran them in Liege but they left me cold. Not that they weren't good stories, but when he came back you'd think he was a one-man airborne army in himself. Moreover, I'm getting more than a little fed up with him and it's just as well that I'm not around him. While I'm away from him my attitude might change for the better. I hate to feel badly about anyone, especially the way I do about him. Andy is in Nice with Bud now. Perhaps when this job ends I'll feel more

like going down there than I do now. There is a nice crowd of fellows down there now, but unless Bud has changed his ways since I saw him last I'm afraid my patience with him would run out.

About Benny capturing 25 Germans... oh, hon, please. Those stories about the German edition and how they stormed the town, etc., were so much hokum. I asked Bob about it and he was embarrassed. He said the facts were completely distorted.

Actually there wasn't an armed person in Pfungstadt when they got there; nothing but a handful of old, feeble and frightened people. If Benny or anyone else captured any Germans it was to herd them into a house or something. Why, between us, hon, there was only one man on that expedition who would know which way to point a gun. That would be Ed Clark, a field reporter whom we got on the merger with the Mediterranean bunch who came up from Italy. The whole story is the joke of the *Stars and Stripes* with those involved claiming ignorance of the whole thing.

In your April 10 letter you were wishing you could afford to take a week off and go to the country with Jane. Then you also mentioned "finance trouble" and the thought of working nights, etc. Those are the things I want you to tell me, sweetheart. Please don't ever hold them back in fear of worrying me or something. Now, let's analyze the situation:

Darling, we certainly have enough money for you to take more than a week off any time you want to. If the fact that I asked you to send something to me prevented that I would have wanted you to take what you wanted. I know you have no way of knowing that but hon, haven't I always said if you saw fit too spend every penny we had on anything, it was all right with me, and no questions asked. If you feel like a week off, for heaven's sake cash some bonds, or do something and take it. By the love of Pete, when I get back next time I definitely will not take "no" for an answer when I want you to buy clothes of whatever else you may want or need.

I loved the way you made your mind up to try and get over here. I could easily picture those eyes blazing, your lips tightened with firm resolution and an "I'll show 'em" chin sticking out. I fully realize how difficult it would be and that the chance will be one in a million, but I loved you so much for the way you reacted.

Things haven't changed since I wrote you about the situation but if it does alter, and it appears as if I would be home before I expected, I'll let you know toot suite.

If it's a secret, let's keep it that way, but Earl confided that he's pretty sure he is going to be a pappy, God willing.

In the letter I received from my cousin Joan, she told me her husband was killed in the Pacific. Poor kid has been married only about two years and has a baby her husband never saw. Joan is Aunt Jo's youngest daughter and sister of Jackie, whom you might remember from my mention of her. Jackie and her Air Force captain husband are still in Florida. ["Aunt Jo" was Josephine, Ella Kiley's sister.]

I was a little surprised about Bette falling for a sailor. I only hope she didn't go off the deep end because a year is an awful long time to wait when they have known each other such a short time.

Holy Cow! Look who's talking. I suddenly remembered about a couple of other people who were supposed to be strangers, being separated for two and half years and being more in love than anybody had been since the beginning of time. Know them, sweetheart?

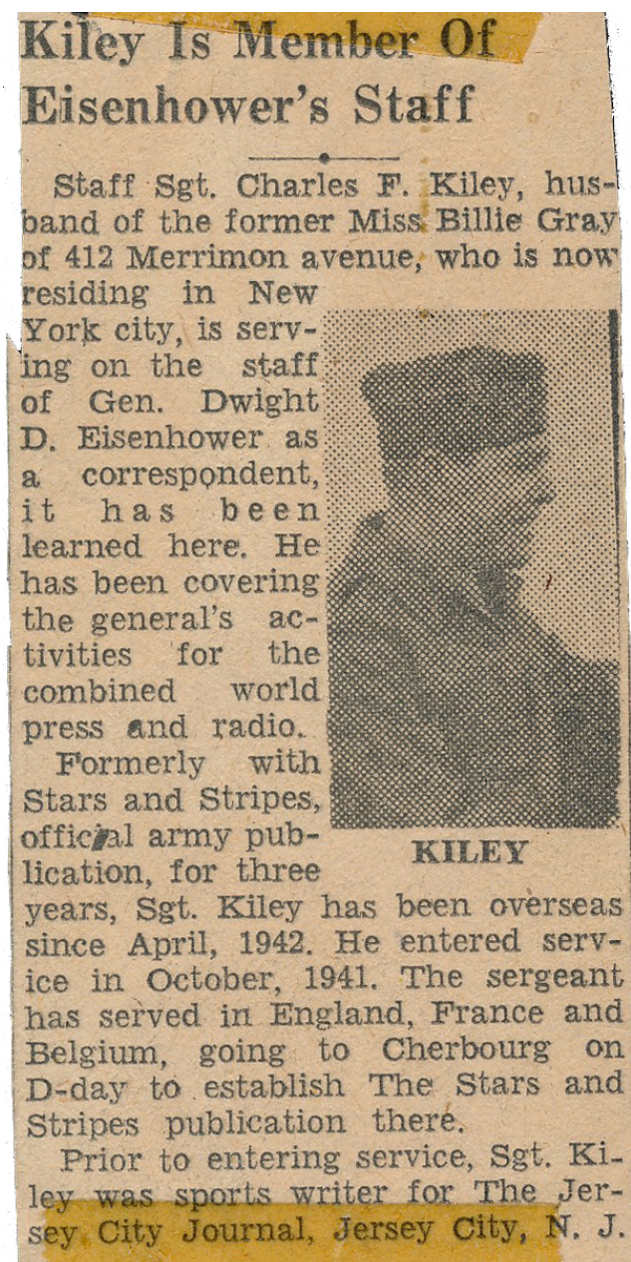
The close of the war is imminent and it makes me feel good, dearest. All we are waiting for here is the official word that it's all over.

Love me and miss me, because I'm at the stage where I'm worshipping your memory, darling. I'm being awful, awful good for you and staying perfectly healthy. My wee bit of a cold is all gone now. I'll be back again soon.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

May 3, 1945—New York



Clipping from the Asheville Citizen-Times that appeared in that paper some time in April 1945

Hello, Mr. K.,

Mrs. K. reporting for duty. How's everything on your side? Are you as tense and as excited as we are? The end is so near. There isn't much left for us to fight with. It's this waiting now and these darn rumor-mongers.

Your letter written a week ago tonight arrived this morning. You're such a nice guy. No wonder good things come your way. It all sounds so exciting. I'm afraid settling down or just being married isn't going to very exciting after all this. This you'll be able to stand it?

I love hearing all the little details. I've been looking for your stuff. Father John found one in the Times... also one in a Newark paper with your byline.

I talked to Ray Roche at lunchtime. Thought I'd better give him a ring. Of course, he wanted to know all about you and I told him about your new assignment and then he got excited. He must have passed the word around because tonight a Frank Candmas (something like that, hon—the connection wasn't too good. I asked him twice but still didn't get it) called and wanted a few details. I told him as much as I thought was necessary. He said he knew you but missed seeing you on several occasions when you were home. You'll be taking up space in the Jersey Journal again. Do you mind? [This clipping has not been found.]

It does seem like a wonderful spot. I don't like them calling you "Chuck." Ugh. How in the world did that get started? I like my names much better. It's amazing how you're getting in on everything and very wonderful. I can't think of a better spot to be in.

I'm sorry you're having to wait for the mail especially if you feel the way I do about waiting for mail. I hope you've had some by now.

Received the letter from Benny. He wants to come home. Guess he's pretty disgusted with the whole mess. Marg was down last night and elaborated on Bud's deal about going to Nice from information Joe passed on to her.

I wasn't being a good girl, hon. People make a lot of fuss about nothing. I was there so I was able to be of help. You don't think I could do otherwise. Knowing Jane, the thought of going to a hospital made her worse, so since hospitalization wasn't necessary if I could be there, Mrs. K. rose to the occasion and took over for a bit. I hope and pray we don't have another siege because Mrs. P can exercise her will at 104 degrees and flat on her back. The only time I had her down to my size was when the thermometer was in her mouth, then she'd talk with her hands.

I have a good feeling inside, hon, such a good feeling. Maybe, oh let's hope and pray a little more that we'll be together before many more months go by.

Jane and I are going to Albany with Marg tomorrow night. I'll write you from there. We're to spend the weekend in their country home. Just imagine having two houses. I'll be satisfied with a two by four room, hon, so don't get any ideas. It's sweet of Marg to ask us. I'd love to see some honest to goodness rural scenery for a change, unbroken by concrete, etc.

It's time for little girls like Mrs. K. (I can say that now and almost mean it) to be tucked in nice. As usual it's late and Jane has long since gone to sleep. I think I'm just a night-hawk, hon, that I never get in bed.

I love you, Mr. K. so much. I loved being told "I love you, Mrs. Kiley." I love the way it sounds. Tell it to me often, please and do miss me and love me always.

All my love and kisses, always and forever, your Mrs. Kiley

May 6, 1945—New York

Darling,

This is the first time I've been back since Thursday. Is it all right for me to come in? Honest, hon, it wasn't my fault at all. This *Stars and Stripes* keeps us up all hours. Honest, we don't know how to get out of it. Seems these guys who are back now haven't had furloughs. They are at loose ends not knowing anyone at all around here so of course, since our welcome mat is out they always feel as if they can come here and sit around and chat, and you know how long they chat.

Friday we were supposed to go to Albany as I told you, but the weather was so nasty we decided to call it off until there was a better weekend for the country. I met Jane and Marg for dinner and a

show, but when I arrived at the office, Russ Jones and Bill Gibson were along also so we ended up at the Commodore for a drink and then went to the Homestead down here in the Village for dinner, and, of course, from there to 5L. We practically threw them out, finally, about two-thirty. Marg stayed with us. She went home yesterday because she had some things to attend to. Jane and I were all set for a quiet Saturday night with the Sunday papers and letters to you and Benny when we were invaded by Russ Jones, Art White and, of all people, Charlie White. Art landed yesterday from England along with Major Marcher and another fellow from the Rome edition who was recently transferred to France when they merged. Charlie White I hadn't seen since I met him the afternoon in the office, which he doesn't remember of course. He was very sober, however, last night and we really enjoyed hearing some of the tales of the days in London. Art White is by far one of the nicest fellows I've met yet. He really seems to be a nice guy. He was quite interested in your new job. Seems you were just going there when he left or he had heard about it. Anyway, he wanted to know your reaction, etc.

No matter who comes back and regardless of who they are they never have anything but nice things to say about you, even those you probably disapprove of, and they know it. They seem to say them in all sincerity. Knowing you, I can't help but believe them. Art White said something last night, though, that I hadn't heard from anyone. Perhaps this isn't very nice, but it makes me believe the nice things he says about you. He said you were the only guy he ever knew that could loaf and still look as if he were working.

They all agreed that if you hadn't gone on the paper that you would have been a captain by this time in the infantry, that you had all the qualifications of a good line officer. I hastened to reassure them that I was glad you were on the paper, and still a sergeant rather than being in the lines and a captain. Selfish of me perhaps, but I want you back.

Your letter written Tuesday, April 24, arrived in the last mail Friday. I was so happy to get it. Now I have the three letters you wrote in four days. I do hope you will be able to write me as often as that, hon, because it's nice being with you.

It's swell you haven't had to work so hard. This will give you an opportunity to make up for those months you worked twelve and fourteen hours a day. Strange how things work out, isn't it?

I must be still missing a letter because I haven't received any other list of the "family" than the one enclosed with this letter. I'm very happy to know all of them and to know they all seem to be so nice. Don't know why there has to be the WACs, though. Jealous again, as usual. Just don't want females around you when I can't be there. Isn't that awful? How do you put up with me? It's just that you're so nice, hon. Oh, well... I'm sure you'll be all right. (Gee, I don't know whether I'm kidding or not.)

I haven't seen "Winged Victory" yet. It hasn't been to the corner movie, but I understand it's very good. I think, though, that the Rooneys thought it disgusting as well as "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo," but I enjoyed the latter very much so I can't believe them, but thank heaven we don't think the same way they do.

We're all still tense over the coming news. We know that it's nearly over but the final word is still yet to come. It's good to know that there are so many that aren't fighting there now. I'm very grateful that they decided not to issue a proclamation and the clean up. That would have been horrible. As it is, there is very likely going to be some damn fools who will celebrate the way they will when the word does come, but it would have been twice as bad if they had still been fighting.

There have been a great many rumors and reports about the discharging of some two million men and they are still saying more strongly now, that those who have been in uniform four years will be discharged regardless of where they are, and that it will begin in July. Perhaps it's selfish of me, but I can't help it. You've served your time as far as I can see. I know, though, that as long as you can be of some use you'd stay in and I'd feel the same way if it were me. Funny, isn't it? I'd probably have made a good soldier.

I still have that awful twinge about not doing anything, except wait for you and that wan't hard to do. Oh, well, it's nearly over now and a little too late to try and redeem myself.

It's good to sit here with your typewriter in our little two by four and be with you. I made up my mind that come what may today there was going to be a letter to Mr. K. or I'd know the reason why, so I'm taking no chances.

Your paragraph about needing me for self-confidence brought me up short. That's my line. Somehow I have never thought of you without that. You've always been the picture of self confidence and I've been drawing on it all these years. I know the job you have has frightened me, too, because hearing about it from the fellows who are back and what you have told me, I know what it means. I knew, too, that there wan't anything to worry about because you'd take it in your stride and do a good job, as always. I'm glad you're "loose as ashes." That is good. See, I knew there was nothing to worry about. I wish I could tell you how very proud I am, not because you're representing the press and what have you, but because you're you. I always have such a humble feeling when I realize I belong to you forever and always. I know myself that it couldn't be true because I have a long way to go but Jane, Marg and a few others... Joe, too... said that I was a female Charles. I think that's the nicest compliment I ever had.

Charlie White was telling me about the "cheesecake" days and about the time you first went to London for the paper... your first air raid. Then we heard about how he put out an incendiary bomb with his overcoat. He told me too about the buzz bombs in Liege. You didn't tell me very much about that. I had no idea they were so bad. Gives me a strange feeling to know what you've seen and done. Talking to all of them coming back makes me realize there is a lot you haven't told me, but, too, I probably know more than you think I do.

Tell me, did you ever get your watch from Joe? You never mentioned it.

Jane and I have been making some great plans in the event you do come home. That is, if Benny decides to stay around here. Anyway, should you come home this summer, for a couple of months anyway, we thought we could get a house or a large cottage on Long Island or somewhere together, or doesn't that strike you? Jane and I both decided we'd like to be alone but knew that it would

probably last for about a week and then if we were anywhere near each other we'd be finding our way to them, or vice versa. Silly, isn't it, but you know my wild dreams.

They are singing "Night and Day." Remember that afternoon very soon after we were married... we were still in New York and I sang that to you walking along the street. People must have thought we were crazy but I couldn't have cared less. We did have such a glorious three and a half months. Something lots of people only dream about. From the very first day when I thought you were going to kidnap me or something. You might have noticed that I didn't put up much resistance. That was funny as I look back because you were so serious.

The sun has decided to come out and Mrs. Price would like to go for a walk so I guess that's what will happen. I think we'll go to a movie tonight early so we won't be invaded. We slept straight through this morning 'til twelve o'clock. Guess we really needed the sleep. Anyway, I missed Mass for which I don't feel so good.

Maybe I'll be back tonight and let you tuck me in. Would you like that? Do you suppose it could be that soon we will be together again? I know it's wishful thinking but I do have a good feeling inside.

I love you so much, Mr. K. Take specially good care of you and be careful of those sniffles. I hope they are all gone by now. The sleep is a good medicine for them. Miss me, darling and love me even more.

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

PS: The paper is some I got from the office if you're wondering. I had to trim it down. The typing is out of this world but I've gotten used to my Noiseless. Now I can't write on this. I love you.

May 6, 1945—New York

Hello, Mr. K.,

May I come in again for a little while? You may remember I said I'd be back and here I am. Been catching up on my correspondence with our family. Just finished writing to Mom, Lee, Warren and my sister Kay besides two letters to you on the way. Not doing so bad, am I? I've been using the typewriter, too. Getting so I can bat letters off quicker this way, especially those home. Yours I sort of write in spurts and jumps because I don't just dash you off a letter to let you know I'm alive. Don't have much interest in the other letters. That's bad, isn't it, but I guess it's to be expected.

We were invaded again in the persons of Russ and Art, but only for a little while. We didn't have any liquor, only some ginger ale, so we went for a long walk. Rode up to Central Park on the Fifth Avenue bus and then walked to 84th Street through the park. I couldn't help but think of the few times we walked there after we were married and those few days we spent in New York. They left us about six thirty to meet Lois Bucknell for dinner. They asked us but we said no. Don't think I could have stood another evening so we had a quiet supper, Jane and I, and I've been writing letters since. She's been doing laundry, ironing and reading Time... nice, quiet evening. We're going to bed early, I hope.

You'd be so amused at our wild conversation, Jane and I, about what we'll do. Jane is saying that about 8 weeks after VE day, we should know what will happen but I think that is too soon. I just don't want to be too optimistic. Reports tonight say that they will fly 50,000 men a month back to this country who will be discharged... that it will take a year to discharge all the ones who will be eligible.

We were talking tonight that if you and Benny worked in New York that we would very likely rather find apartments in New York but that maybe we could lease a cabin together for weekends. This is on the assumption that you will be home sometime this summer, which I'm not counting on too strongly. That's a little too good to be true. Anyway, if we can, we'd like to be Mrs. Kiley and Mrs. Price for a couple of months if we could... that is, not work unless it was necessary, then after a couple of months we'd go to work. We're going to pester the daylights out of you or at least I am because I'll want to go to lunch with you and things like that so it wouldn't be such a good idea to live too far out, would it? Do you think we're a little off the beam? Wouldn't be surprised if you did.

We have so much to look forward to that I can't help being a bit excited that the end is so near and maybe you will be able to come home. It just has to be soon. Here or there doesn't matter just as long as we're together.

We were wondering tonight if you would be able to figure out a way to fly back or if you'd have to come back via the ocean voyage of a few weeks. Art was telling me they had a little trouble coming over so the subs must still be at work.

Please, hon, don't think I'm jumping to conclusions with my wild chatter about you coming home, and VE-day. It's wishful thinking and I'm trying very hard not to be optimistic and realize that perhaps it will be a time before we can be together. With the news the way it is, I guess we can't help going through this reaction.

It looks like we're really going to bed early. I have to rinse my laundry out and hang it up, and then I'll be ready. Think you could stick around that long and tuck me in nice? How I'd love to say my prayers with you tonight and really have you tuck me in. I'd even drag out my white nightgown that I haven't worn since you left, the one that has the blue ribbons on it or didn't you ever notice it had blue ribbons on it? I'd tie a fresh ribbon in my hair. I guess I'm just getting tired of sleeping with Mrs. Price.

Love me always darling and take such good care of you just for me, please. I do love you so much, Mr. K. and miss you more than I should, I suppose, but just can't help it.

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

May 7, 1945—Rheims, France

Good morning, sweetheart

So sorry I had to kiss you awake again so early. It's five o'clock.

But, I'm sure you wanted to be awakened because the war against Germany ended two hours and 15 minutes ago. Yes, it's really over this time.

I know. I was there when the unconditional surrender terms were signed in the war room of Gen. Eisenhower's headquarters at 2:45 a.m.

I had been on top of the surrender since it first developed Saturday.

Adm. Friedeburg, the German Commander in Chief of Naval Forces, arrived here then.

I was the only correspondent here all Saturday and yesterday until 18 correspondents and radio men came up from Paris at 7 o'clock last night.

As representative of the combined press and radio I had to cover for everybody until they got here.

All during the preliminary negotiations between the Germans and Gen. Smith, Chief of Staff to Gen. Ike, I was in a room adjacent to Gen. Smith's office.

The only part of the surrender which any of the rest covered was the ceremony of signing in the war room.

It was a dramatic event, angel, eve though we all expected something soon.

I'm so tired, sweetheart. Been up at 6:00 the last couple of days and on the go.

I have some of my stuff written but I want a little sleep before I continue.

I'll do about 2,000 words for the combined press and radio for those who weren't here and want to use it. Then there will be another 1,500 or so for *Stars and Stripes*.

I've tried to cover everything down to a rustle of paper during the last couple of days I only hope I haven't missed anything.



Admiral Friedeburg arriving at SCHAEF headquarters for the surrender negotiations. May 5, 1945. This is one of 50 original photographic prints of the German surrender that Charles collected from the photographer, Lt. Leo Moore, who was General Eisenhower's Signal Corps photographer.

The story is not to be released until tomorrow afternoon although I'm certain it's going to leak out before then.

See you tonight, darling.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

May 7, 1945—New York

My dearest one

I still isn't official, but it will be tomorrow, I'm sure. There was enough excitement today to make it official.

A great many places closed, but I worked and I was very glad I had something to do to hold me together. Oh, darling, it's actually over. Not too long from now we'll be together. I think I'm still dazed from the last few weeks' activities in the news. Naturally, it didn't come as a surprise since we've been expecting it hourly. There wasn't as much hysteria and wild excitement as there would have been if we hadn't been prepared.



Jane called me at noon and said we were supposed to meet the Stars and Strippers this evening, but I couldn't face any celebration without you and somehow it didn't seem right. I couldn't help but think of Eddie and the report that Gen. Patton's army was still fighting, and the Pacific still looms in the background, so before anyone could call me I took off for 195 right after work. I wanted to be there. Bette had been sent home earlier in the day. Western Electric closed and El and the baby were home. Pop worked 'til late. Didn't get home 'til nearly ten. We had a couple of glasses of beer, paid Kay Emerson, who had been ill, a visit and almost made a sunsuit for Annice but it was good. We were together and I wanted it that way.

Evidently, Jane didn't see the bureau-ites either because she was home when I got in. She hasn't offered any information as to what happened so I'm still in the dark. She can never quite get used to the idea that I actually enjoy going to 195 and being with them. I'm grateful they are so close.

My little mind is so full of questions without answers, mostly about how soon we will know what will happen... if and when we'll be together.

It's exciting and wonderful to be a part of all this. I understand, according to the latest news bulletin, that SHAEF still isn't able to make a statement. Of course, Edward Kennedy has been suspended.

Before I heard his name mentioned I began to be a bit frightened at that story for fear you had done something wrong but soon breathed a sigh of relief. At least I know where you are now... at or near Rheims.

Funny, we both spent the night of the “false alarm” up ‘til all hours. Gave me a good feeling to have you tell me all about it before you tried to sleep. I’m glad you have this wonderful opportunity. I can’t think of a better way to finish out this deal than with the general.

I can just see you rushing around, getting things done. By the way, the Jersey Journal story appeared Friday. Haven’t seen it yet. I’ll have to ask Ray to send me a copy. El sent all of them away that she had. Anyway, the good citizens of Jersey City have been extending their congratulations all over the place.

I heard a rumor that Johnnie Joyce is home from Burma. I’ll see if I can contact his sister. I’d like very much to see him. It seems Bussy Emerson was in the park playing ball and this soldier was watching. He and Bussy struck up a conversation and Bussy learned that he had just returned from Burma and that he saw you in England last, that his name was Johnnie J... something, Bussy said. I was under the impression Johnnie transferred over to the Air Corp before he left the U.S. The Burma business rings true. Bussy said he was 27, unmarried. Found out quite a bit, didn’t he? Bussy told him you were Eisenhower’s secretary and apparently the soldier wasn’t at all surprised.

The baby found your picture in the paper and brought it to El, saying “Brother.” She now calls me by name, too. Isn’t it sweet?

This will amuse you. El, Bette and a few of the other girls on the block have a club. They bought a bank for their dues... a glass ball sort of thing, that says “change for the new baby.” The bank is sitting on the mantel in front of my picture. Father John came in the other day and got all excited... thought there was something significant about it. He certainly would have known by now... he should know better.

I can imagine Benny was a bit irked at not finding an *Stars and Stripes* man when he phoned. I would have been. I don’t know how they are working tonight. I’m saving the papers for our scrapbook.

I can’t get over your waking the general up... not really, but almost. I’m envious but so proud and glad you’re there in the middle of it all.

I think I saved the column Pegler wrote defending AP and the reporter who broke the false alarm in 1919 three or four days before the Armistice.

It’s still hard to believe. We’ve waited so long. I stopped in the little Spanish church this afternoon for a few minutes. There were more candles burning than you could count. The priest had moved them inside to the alter and spread them on a table inside the sacristy and kept replacing the stands in the church with new candles.

It was so wonderful to share it all with you. Timely that your letter of the “false alarm” should arrive today, the almost official VE-day, because I’m sure it was as exciting if not more so.

I'll be such a good girl always, hon, if you make chocolate and toast for me in the middle of the night and let me come over to your house, just for a little while.

My heart is so full tonight. So many things I want to share with you. I've been numb practically all day. I have no recollection of the work I did today. I wanted to be with you. I knew I couldn't feel happy about it 'til you held me in your arms and told me it was all over and nothing would ever keep us apart again.

Goodnight, my darling. I love you so very much.

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

May 7, 1945—Rheims, France

Hello sweetheart,

Well, you know all about it now. That is, you have read the report of the surrender. When I spoke with you early this morning I felt the unconditional surrender would leak out ahead of time. And it has.

The Associated Press is reported to have told of the surrender here early this morning. The news was not to be released until tomorrow (Tuesday) afternoon. But apparently Ed Kennedy of the AP, one of the 18 correspondents and radio men who came up here last night from Paris for the ceremonies, managed to get word back through some devious method, avoiding censorship. Probably got through a phone call to London, which wasn't monitored. London AP called Stockholm AP and it cabled New York. That's how I see it and I'm wondering if Kennedy will be punished in any way. It was a direct breach of security. Had it been me, I would have been courtmartialed. But that's the penalty of being a soldier.

As I said, everybody knows about it now. Reports say New York is celebrating, London and Paris likewise. Even the French paper in Rheims has a big headline. But the *Stars and Stripes*, for example, can use the AP report but nothing else.

All the background and color of the surrender will probably have to wait until after Washington, London and Moscow make formal announcements tomorrow.



General Jodl (center) signing the surrender at SCHAEF headquarters in Reims. Reporters and photographers in the background. May 7, 1945.

In my letter this morning I said I had been on top of the whole surrender story since it developed, beginning Saturday when Adm. Friedeburg arrived here. Then, Gen. Jodl arrived yesterday and in no time at all the surrender terms were laid out and signed.

It all happened so suddenly it seemed like a long day's work. No dramatics, except Jodl's last address to the Allied signers in which he asked that generosity be shown to the German people.

I had a call from the Press Room HQ in Paris this afternoon complimenting me on the job I did for the combined press. I'll have to wait until *Stars and Stripes* is able to use the stuff before I see how it goes over down there.

Meanwhile, I received to extra-special, four-star, super-super bits of heaven today. Also got one from Jane and the wire stories from Bill Spear, which I'm sending back to you.

Darling, you wondered if you were "normal" in wanting "something as simple as a home and children," in view of ideas expressed by possibly Jane and Marg.

Yes, sweetheart, you are normal. At least, it's my idea of normalcy because that's what I want and little more. The little more, of course, grows into something very, very big because I also want you.

This is my outlook about staying over here, Billee, once and for final.

I don't want to stay here. I want to go home to you and stay there. I couldn't care less about traipsing all over Europe. I want you, a home and a chance to make up for what adds up to nothing more than four wasted years. Okay?

I loved your blue ribbon. I'm thinking of wearing it myself tonight.

Incidentally, I may be going on quite a trip by air tomorrow. If so, I'll tell you about it when I get back.

I hate to confess how weary I am now, angel. but I just have to go. It's been a long couple of days and I want to go to bed. Forgive me, please?

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

May 8, 1945—New York

My dearest

VE-day is nearly over and it's been a quiet day, at least for me, and I think for a great many other people. I still didn't go uptown and get in the mob but Jane says there were bots of people but they were not hysterically happy, especially not today. Edward Kennedy provided them with the excuse for a celebration yesterday with his unofficial dispatch.

The office sent us home at three o'clock today. I took our radio over to the office so we could hear the overseas broadcasts. There wasn't too much work accomplished so it was just as well.

I especially wanted to hear Eisenhower because I knew somewhere in the background you were there and I could be a little closer to you that way.

Gives one a wonderful feeling, though, to be a part of all this. It's something awfully big.

We received word tonight that Stalin had declared VE-day after midnight I presume. It was after six o'clock our time. They are still fighting in some sections, however.

Jane had the afternoon off, too, but a little earlier than I. Believe she went to the museum. I came home and ironed and started to clean up the apartment when she came in. We had a late supper and celebrated with a glass of sherry before dinner.

Tonight we listened to all the broadcasts and sewed. Mrs. K. is getting very domestic. Jane is trying to make a dress, too, with a little assistance from me but I'm afraid her blood pressure will win out. She doesn't have much patience for that. She cusses at it almost as hard as Benny would. She looks very glamorous in her new upswept hairdo. She had some of her hair cut.

I think Mrs. K. is going to invest in a feather cut for the summer. I don't think I'm going to relish getting up early to put my hair up, especially in the heat.

My mind has been wandering all over the place today, of course, wondering how soon we'd hear about the plans for *Stars and Stripes* officially, I mean. We haven't seen any of the Stars and Stripes in a couple of days. I guess they are busy celebrating.

Jane received her letter from Benny yesterday, too, telling of the false rumor that Saturday a week ago. Coincidental we should get them on almost the official VE-day.

You haven't said yet about getting the money from Earl. I'll feel a lot better about that when it's in your hands. I heard something about him that surprised me and if he'd be dishonest one way he might be in another. I'm not judging, however, 'til I know.



Eisenhower and Air Marshall Tedder, Deputy Supreme Commander, as they made the radio address announcing the German surrender from SHAEF headquarters, Reims. May 7, 1945.

Rita called this evening and I'm meeting her tomorrow night for a show.

I understand Earl, Hod and Bob may have to take administrative jobs. Somehow I can't see them playing that role.

Did I tell you about the story in Newsweek written by a fellow named Neuman who was with Hod when they met the Russians? Really good.

Jane is being transferred from advertising research to secretary to the sales manager. She's trying to work her way into the editorial department.

I'm all nice and clean, darling, in your blue 'jamas but my hair is all pinned up because I washed it, so maybe you wouldn't like me tonight to tuck in.

El was asking questions last night about when you would be able to come home. I could only tell her her guess was as good as mine.

You never did make any comment on my giving the perfume to Bette. Were you displeased? She was so pleased with it and I had so much.

I liked the way the General spoke. He has such a confident voice. There's something very good about it. What a super-wonderful experience. It's a little bit bad that Jules Grad missed the last act when he was so close to it, but I'm glad you were able to take over is someone had to.

We nearly had a riot of a sort out front early this evening. I don't know whether the cause was drunk or not. He was taking his clothes off, we could see, and being subdued by three very burly cops. Seems there was a sailor involved, too, evidently not at fault because they didn't take him along in the wagon that arrived in about ten minutes. The drunk, supposedly, was really raving and ranting. People gathered from all over. One thing, hon, we rarely ever have any dull moments around here.

Jane and I stayed a few minutes this a.m. and heard the president make his official proclamation. I've wanted you so many times today to share all this with, but I know that you are feeling the same way. I'm anxious to get your letter telling about it all.

I forgot to tell you last evening that Dr. Keegan was asking for you and he's quite proud of you, too. He told El when he paid a call to Kay Emerson Monday. Seems he saw the picture in the paper, too.

I haven't talked to Father John. I figured he'd probably be awfully busy. He says he hasn't heard from you in weeks... heard this via El.

I'll let you tuck me in now, hon, pincurls and all. I love you so, and miss you so much more but I have such a good feeling that soon you'll be having to put up with my pincurls and seeing me in your blue pajamas. Don't think I'll give them back. Miss me, darling, and love me.

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

May 9, 1945—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

This is so strange. I think sometimes it is all a wild dream. This morning I was driving and walking through what is left a completely destroyed Berlin.

This afternoon I sat at a table outside a sidewalk cafe on the Champs Elysees, watching one of the most unbelievable and colorful sights I'll ever see... thousands and thousands of Parisians,



Air Marshall Tedder (left) with Russian officials touring the bombed sections of Berlin. It may be Charles on the extreme right of this picture. Berlin, May 8, 1945.

solders of all nations just walking in a solid mass along the wide boulevard. Traffic is closed to the Champs today... the second holiday of the VE Day celebrations. Off to my right the Arc de Triomphe is a picture to behold. It stands almost alone, towering and somehow symbolic of this victory. Flags that must be the largest ever flown anywhere hang from the top of the Arc down almost to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier below.

It is a warm spring day. The glass of wine I have in front of me tastes like something I have never tasted before. It must be the atmosphere.... It tastes like the best of all vintages. It is a happy day, sweetheart... and there is something missing. Yes... you. I want you so to be with me. Wanted you to be with me when I came back from Berlin... to tell me everything. No, I'd wait until this day was over. I'd just want you to be with me now. I'm awfully tired but I'll stay with you now, darling. I'll try to give you the complete picture. From the beginning:

Last Saturday I was told by phone that I was to work on what may be the unconditional surrender. The message came from SHAEF headquarters in Paris and from Col. Dupuy, public relations head. As the combined press and radio man, that would be my job. For the present, no correspondents would be notified of impending developments. The message came over what is called a "garbled" phone. The person on the other end talks in the clear, the words are scrambled over the wires but I hear the man perfectly on this end.

Saturday evening, Adm. von Friedeburg was flown from Germany to Rheims to start negotiations. I was kept informed of everything. The following day Gen. Jodl, German Chief of Staff, arrived and thereby set the stage for the surrender. I had written about 3,000 words on the background which was distributed to 16 correspondents who were flown at the last minute from Paris to Rheims. From that point we were on our own.

The surrender ceremony started at about 2:15 a.m. Monday morning and was over shortly afterward. There were scenes in Gen. Eisenhower's office and other offices at HQ, so that it wasn't all over until about five.

I slept for three hours, got up and started on my stories. I filed them from here shortly after noon, then heard about the AP's violation of the release. It was a terrible breach of ethics, with the man, Ed Kennedy, deliberately filing the flash after being informed nothing was to be released until after 3 p.m. on Tuesday. I thought the job was finished until I was notified at 8 p.m. Monday night that I was going to Berlin next morning. The Berlin job was to be a ratification of the first surrender and a show for the Russians.

Eight correspondents, none of whom had been at the Rheims surrender, flew in one plane, Leo Moore and I flying with Air Marshall Tedder and the official Allied party in another. We made a rendezvous with the three German chiefs of the Army, Navy and Air Force at a former German airfield in Stendal, 50 miles from Berlin, then continued on to Templehof airfield in Berlin. The sight of the city was appalling. I can just ask you to picture a huge city completely destroyed. That's the simple picture.

The negotiations went on all afternoon and night before the ceremony started after midnight, Berlin time. After the ceremony came the official victory banquet with Marshal Zhukov as the host. I'll never forget that one, angel.

After 24 toasts, no sleep for gosh knows how long, vodka, champagne, cognac, wine, caviar, squab, Russian cigarettes, the picture of hopeless people, weary refugees streaming through Berlin, smoldering fires still in evidence... I was pretty well done in.

We drove through the center of Berlin... Unter den Linden, the Chancellery, Kaiser's Palace, Tiergarten... so many more places just skeletons of buildings, rubble, brick, dust, twisted girders, charred wood.

Without sleep we flew down in Paris in three and a half hours... I started my stories on the plane, finished them in Paris and then proceeded to stay up until now... 2:35 a.m. Thursday morning. I'm at the Scribe Hotel, Press HQ.



Air Marshall Tedder (left) at the celebration in Berlin after the surrender signing there. May 8,

I can hear the crowds still parading and yelling, planes overhead all day and night shooting flares, buzzing the Champs at 200 feet (French planes), red flood lights beautifying the Opera, water fountains spraying 50 feet high around the fountains at Place de la Concorde.

This is the Paris I wanted to see and I'm satisfied there isn't another place like it. That is, as it is now. It will slip back tomorrow and be just like other cities.

And, please sweetheart... I'm going now. I'm flying back to Rheims tomorrow, or this morning I should say, in the General's new four-engined C54. I'll be sure to be with you tonight. Love me and miss me lots and lots, Billee dearest.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

May 9, 1945—New York

My dearest one,

I was right and you were present at the surrender. You're in the papers, hon. Concerning the Edward Kennedy incident. It's too bad that had to happen. El called me today and said the Jersey Journal carried the AP release, but of course, added a little color to it which was expected. They're almost as proud as I. I bought all the evening papers but couldn't find it. At supper time the little Italian girl I worked with at Time called me and told me that it was in the Tribune. Luckily Jane had brought hers home and I found it. I'm saving the different coverage of the "incident" because I thought you'd be interested. I can't get over how wonderful it is that you were there. I've saved all the pictures of the surrender, etc., for our scrapbook.



Paris on VE Day.

KILEY PRESENT AT SURRENDER

PARIS (AP)—Following are the allied correspondents who were present at the German unconditional surrender at Reims:

Jean E. Lagrange, Agence France Presse; Michael Litvin-Sedoy, Tass Agency; Edward Kennedy, Associated Press; Price Day, Baltimore Sun and representing Exchange Telegraph; Margaret Ecker, Canadian Press; James Kilgallen, International News Service; Boyd Lewis, United Press; Sergt. Ross Perry, Canadian Army's Maple Leaf; Montague Taylor, Reuters; Sergt. Charles Kiley, Stars and Stripes, U. S. Army newspaper; Gerald Clark, Montreal Standard and representing Canadian Broadcasting Co.; Paul Manning, Mutual Broadcasting Co.; Osmar White, Australian Press; Thomas Cadett, British Broadcasting Co.; Herbert M. Clark, Blue Network; Charles Collingwood, Columbia Broadcasting System, and W. W. Chaplin, National Broadcasting Co.

Sergt. Kiley is a former Jersey Journal sports reporter, now in the U. S. Army. Gen. of the Army Eisenhower recently named Kiley as his personal reporter.

Kiley was one of eight reporters at the surrender who refused to sign a letter sent by the other reporters to General Eisenhower, protesting Edward Kennedy's AP "scoop" on the surrender.

From The Herald Tribune.

I met Rita tonight for the movie and she told about Earl's new administrative position that is upcoming. We saw the strangest movie, "Enchanted Cottage," really enjoyable... at least I enjoyed it. Not a picture, however, that everyone would like. The "Claudia" cast was in it... Robert Young and Dorothy McGuire and also Herbert Marshall.

I must tell you how wonderful Broadway looked all lighted and the Times Building's new headlines... what a difference. I was much impressed, too, that nine out of ten servicemen I saw had overseas stripes, a goodly number of them, too.

There were several items of extreme interest in the paper tonight... one: length of service overseas would be the first and main factor in determining whether a soldier was available for discharge; combat service, family and honor ribbons next. All those that would be discharged for length of service would be sent home by air transport. The second item of interest is that the War Department will not lift the travel ban for dependents of soldiers in Europe to that theatre because of food and housing shortages and because of political unrest among the people. So that seems to be that. I can't seem to figure a way around that one. El was telling me tonight on the phone that Pop was asking when you'd be able to come home.



It's a beautiful night and I'd like so much to have you here so I could share this good feeling I have with you. Darling, I love you so much, can you possibly know how much? I can't help but think of Rita tonight and wonder if she knows about Earl. I think I should die if it were you. I wouldn't know how to cope with that. It's a strange group of people we're living with who don't seem to have much notice of things or very much faith in each other.

We've come along way, darling. It seems now as if it's been all my life that I've been waiting for you. Of course, that's true. These past three years or more I've known what I was waiting for and that makes a difference. Soon, and I'm not being literal about that, I still have a little patience left and lots of faith. We'll come to the end of waiting and we'll be together and the waiting will fade into a shadow. I don't think the at after this experience either of us will ever fall into a rut of taking each other or life for granted, because I'll not ever forget the time we spent apart or the lovely nights and days. It's good to make up now, though, and know that it can't be too long now.

I should be a good wife and let you tuck me in. It's such a wonderful night and I have such a good feeling. I love you so, Mr. K. and I'm so proud of you. You don't mind my pride in you, do you?

Say goodnight to me nice... love me and miss me, darling.

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

[Billee's letters between May 10 and May 22 are missing.]

May 11, 1945—*Rheims*

Hello sweetheart,

Here I am back tonight, as I promised. I had thought it would be a quiet, no work day but bright and early this morning we were called. It was a plane trip to a place called Bad Wildungen, in Germany, where the General met all of his Army commanders and most of his air commanders. There were Gens. Bradley, Spaatz, Patton, Hodges, Simpson, Smith, Gerow, Vandenberg and several others. More stars there that you'll find in the sky.



We flew up and back... arrived here at 5:30. Wasn't much of a story but a nice trip.

When I wrote last I failed to mention the two letters I received while I was in Paris for a day. They were beautiful, darling. At least, if I couldn't have you with me I had the little bit of heaven. The letters were those of April 23 and 30.

While in Paris I spent a bit of time with Andy. He has been offered a chance to go to Burma for 90 days and probably will although he's afraid of what Marg might say. It won't be bad... only 90 days and it's a chance to see what's going on over there. He finished his half of the book in Nice and says... "I'm afraid some people aren't going to feel so good about it but that's the way it is." I think he had Bob in mind, but didn't say why he should feel badly.

Everything is going all right with the stuff you send over with Earl. And, while I think of it, I'll be sending a \$200 money order in a few days. You can expect to reimburse what you took from every month or so now.

I'm still not over the hectic week. I suppose things will be real quiet now but it will take some time for me to get back to normal.

When I first came up here I said I was going to write a diary for you. It caused you to bubble over, I think. At least, you said Gen. Ike was "your boy" if he could make me write a diary. Now that I've been here awhile, I can see a diary wouldn't be very apropos. I've told you everything, perhaps not in very much detail, that I would have in a diary.

There were the conferences with the Congressmen, editors and publishers and War Crimes Commission and little else before the surrender stuff started to break. Then, beginning last Saturday there were the preliminaries leading up to the surrender here and then the “second surrender” in Berlin. If I have left out anything you certainly must have read it in the papers.

Funny, somehow the war over here doesn't seem to be over. That is, there is enough of the same thing to see and do to keep you from fully realizing there isn't any fighting. German prisoners still march to and from their work here, work goes on at headquarters. There are plenty of soldiers about.

These are going to be awfully lonely days, darling. Just waiting and waiting. I haven't heard of any change in the *Stars and Stripes* plans for the future except that there is a rumor slowly going the rounds that Col. Eldridge may soon displace Col. Goodfriend as boss, with Goodfriend going to the U.S.

Elmer Roessner, the civilian from OWI [Office of War Information] who has been with *Stars and Stripes* for quite awhile, is going home soon and told me he would like to call you. I've given him the address. Couldn't think of the phone number. Wouldn't that be a fine thing if I suddenly appeared in New York, wanted to call you and couldn't get the number?

Goodnight for now. I'll be back with a long, long love letter as soon as I regain normalcy.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

May 12, 1945—Reims, France

Hello sweetheart,

This is the night before Mother's Day, and I wish I could be with you tomorrow so I could kiss you awake and say, “Morning, little mother-to-be.”

My Mass and Communion tomorrow at the Cathedral will be for our mothers and you.

I was quite busy today. The General drove to two airfields near here to visit repatriated British and American troops who are being flown home.



Charles with Gen. Eisenhower and the repatriated Allied troops. May 12, 1945.

Later, there was a colorful ceremony at the City Hall where the General was made a Citizen of Honor of Reims.

I wish I could give you a little background on Reims, darling. But, all I know is that it is the city of Joan d'Arc, has one of the oldest and most historic and beautiful cathedrals in the world. 28 of France's 34 kings were crowned with coronation ceremonies at the cathedral.

Reims is also the champagne center of the world. Mumm's, Piper-Heidseck and other champagnes originate here.

Oh, yes, I have managed to "taste" a few brands.

Also found time today to get rid of a few things. I sent you two pictures that were taken in Berlin, a book on Hitler to Father John, several papers also to John and a swastika flag to Ray Roche. The swastika is a super, super one which I got in Hitler's office in the Chancellory in Berlin. The flag is an awfully big one and to get rid of it I sent it to Ray Roche, asking him to pass it on to someone who collects those things, or get someone to offer it as a war bond prize. I don't even know why I picked it up. I'd been dead against collecting war souvenirs. I think the last one I picked up was a bottle of cognac from a German headquarters in Cherbourg.

I also sent a couple of packages of Russian cigarettes to John. I saved them from the post-surrender banquet in Berlin. I also have a bottle of vodka which I don't know what to do with.

Rumors are around that the General may make a flying trip to Washington soon. In fact, he may be there and back before this. There isn't any possibility of me, or anyone else but a couple of aides, going with him. I'll ask one of the air crew to call you, if they are able. Wouldn't it be out of the world if I could call you from Washington and tell you I was coming home for couple of days? No, I don't think you'd like that "couple of days." Still, I'd take it if only to be with you for a second.

Goodnight, sweetheart. Have to drop Mom a line. Look beautiful for your goodnight kiss.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles



The cathedral at Reims.

May 15, 1945—Paris

Hello sweetheart,

This is the way it should be with mail. There were seven of your letters waiting for me when I arrived in Paris this morning. The general flew to London for a few days and since there wasn't any reason for me to go I came down to Paris. Your letters were those of May 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9. The last one only six days old. They were beautiful letters, darling. Gave me such a good feeling, knowing how you were affected by the end of the war here.

I'm afraid you went all the way in flattering me as I have never been flattered before in my coverage of the surrender as well as my job at Supreme Allied Headquarters. The Journal must be in a terrible state of news shortage when they go to work on me, again.

I haven't any idea how many surrender stuff was played at home, if at all. But the Paris edition of the Herald Tribune used it on page one. Jeff Parsons, the editor, complimented me on it as well as many of the people in our own office. Sounds like I'm breaking my arm trying to pat myself on the back, so I'd better stop and get on with this. I know there are several things you want to know about.

First, when I figure to come home, and when will the discharge come. If you have been following the redeployment stuff in the paper you know about the point system. The way it stands now the only people who will be considered for discharges are those with 85 points and over. And, even they will not be able to make any plans for discharge until the latter part of June, at the earliest and probably not for four to eight or ten months. The entire picture is very hazy. In any case, I have at least 88 points and may possibly wind up with 98. That puts me under the wire with plenty to spare. Those who have less than 85, like Joe Fleming, might just as well make themselves comfortable for about 1 1/2 or 2 years.

The first ones redeployed here will be those going directly to the Pacific. Next are those who are going to the Pacific but who will go through the States first. Next come the discharges. And, from what I can gather, angel, there's more red tape about getting out of the Army than you'll find stretched around the globe. As it is, though, I am in a fairly good position and I might have reason to be optimistic. But, I couldn't even guess, darling, how long it will be. I'm sure it won't be more than 6 months, but that's only a guess.

Please, hon, don't get discouraged. At least, we know it's over here and that I won't go to the Pacific and that I do have the points for discharge. There are only about a dozen men in the whole *Stars and Stripes* who have enough and they are already taking steps to replace us, in case. So, that is a little encouraging.

You would get a kick out of the way people are scrambling for points. Larsen, for example, needed two or three and the brass is putting him in for a Bronze Star medal which would give him five more. They tell me I'm in for one but it hasn't gotten me the least bit excited. Aside from the point value they are as worthless as a Good Conduct ribbon. Bob, I think, needs ten points so they are putting him in for a Bronze Star and, get this, a Croix de Guerre.

Seems you also get five points for each foreign decoration approved by the War Department and the Croix de Guerre is one of them. The medal should be for a “feat of arms” and the brass, notably Col. Eldridge, today was trying to dream up an excuse to get the medal for Bob. It’s enough to make you ill.

I’m going to wait until tomorrow, sweetheart, to go into your letters. Just now I’m loving you ever so much, and more, and so proud of you. You know how much I’m missing you, but it’s even more than that.

I’ll be back tomorrow, angel. ‘Bye for now.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

PS: Enclosed is the first of the money orders.

May 17, 1945—Reims

Hello Sweetheart,

I’m sure you expected me tonight. Yes, I can see you making yourself beautiful, not that any artificial method is necessary, and saying to yourself, “I just know he will come to see me tonight. He couldn’t possibly forget. Oh, if he does forget, I’ll... well, I’ll just never forgive him. He shouldn’t ever forget a “17.”

You will be watching the clock and listening for the doorbell or the sound of my key in the lock.

Then, just when you have decided I did forget, I will come to you, take you in my arms and kiss you, and say, “Happy Anniversary, sweetheart.”

It will be along time before I let you go because I want to hold you so very close to me and never let you go. I’ll be half covered with lipstick and even you will have a smidge of it on the tip of your nose where I kissed you.

And after that... for hours I will do nothing but tell you how much I love you and adore you and renew my vow to never give you an unhappy moment because you have brought me nothing but happiness and, well, because you’re Mrs. Kiley. I’ll always be grateful for every thought of that.

These last nine months have rushed by, haven’t they? Even now, as I look at you as you were minutes after you changed your name to mine, as you were sitting on the tree stump and standing on the porch of 412, it all seems like such a short time ago.

And tonight, when I haven’t the chance to do it, I want those pictures to come alive so I can tell you, I love you, truly. It has occurred to me often that I didn’t tell you I loved you nearly half as much as I should have. Those moments we were together, the seconds wasted when I could have repeated over and over and over, “I love you so, Billee dearest.”

Now that you succeeded in making yourself comfortable on my lap, there are several things we can talk about, things which you mentioned in the letters I received in Paris.

One was about the possibility of Jane, Benny, you and I being together for awhile after we get home. I haven't any objection, hon, except that I want all of you all to myself.

However, while I haven't had a chance to note Benny's postwar ideas lately, I do think he wants to stay over here after his discharge. That is, if Jane can get over. Otherwise, I know he wants to be with her at home. Still, I don't even know if he plans to stay in New York.

There is one thing you mentioned which puzzles me very much. You said you wondered if "Rita knows about Earl" and that you would "die" if it was me; also that you "wouldn't know how to cope with that." I haven't the slightest idea what you were talking about, hon. It must be pretty bad to make you turn upside down like that. All I know about Earl is that he visited me here for two days, looked very fit, went back to Paris, then to Denmark on a story and is now up in the Ninth Army area for awhile. You sounded as if he had killed a man in cold blood, raped Queen Elizabeth and was now being sent to a leper colony.

It made me happy to know you were at 195 on VE night, darling. I know they would want you there. We had the same idea about celebrating, too.

Say, what about this "change for the baby" business? I believe you, my angel, when you assure me it's not you. But who, then? Is it El? Could be, you know; or is it just for the time when something like that happens.

Don't worry about my new nickname, "Chuck." The only fellow who used it is now calling me, "Charlie." I told him my wife resented him calling me "Chuck," so there!

Getting back to Earl... there was talk of making all officers administrative people but nothing has been done about it. Earl is still reporting. So's Hod, and Bob is on the news bureau. Incidentally, while I was in Paris, I heard Bob was going to London soon to get married. It's the girl I must have told you about... Edith, who was a German alien but who had been England for quite some time before the war.

I also found out that Joe still has my watch in the jewelers. He broke the crystal on it before he could give it to me and has been getting it out "tomorrow" ever since.

You wondered about the perfume you gave Bette... I didn't mind, honestly. You can do anything you want at any time with anything, and it would be all right with me. Of course, I draw a very thick line on a few things, but perfume or other gifts aren't among them.

Judging by your "buzz bombs in Liege" note I gathered Charlie White has been stretching his imagination again. Yes, we did have some, which I couldn't mention in letters, but which I had forgotten about when I could talk about them. There were two days, December 26 and 27, when 450 V-1 bombs fell on greater Liege, but I wasn't there. Some of the circulation fellows, including Pete Hansson, had three very close calls but nobody was injured.

So much for the war... it's over and we all can relax.

Andy ought to be leaving for the Pacific one of these days. He was waiting for his orders a couple of days ago.

The weather here has been beautiful, by way of injecting that into our conversation. Warm, sometimes downright hot, in the daytime and fairly cool at night. The last week has been sort of a lazy one and I'm getting fidgety without knowing what to do about it.

While in Paris, they approached me with two ideas... be managing editor in Paris for 16 days while Larson goes on a junket to Norway, or head the proposed weekly magazine supplement which is upcoming. I said "no" to both, because the managing editor job would not be permanent and I don't know a damn thing about magazines.

When this job is definitely finished, I'll start thinking about something else. And, if the General isn't going to be more active than he has been in the past week, I'll be out of a job pretty soon.

I'm enclosing two more money orders, making \$300 in all that I've sent.

"Bye for a little while. I'm missing you terribly tonight. Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

May 22, 1945—Reims

Hello sweetheart,

This will be my last letter from here. Day after tomorrow we are moving to Frankfurt, where the General will have his new headquarters. He is going to Paris on the day we move for a two-day holiday with Gen. Mark Clark who is coming up from Italy. He also has a date to see Harry Hopkins there. It is all off the record and no reason for me being with him. We'll make the trip to Frankfurt in the General's train.

Our quarters in Frankfurt, as far as I can gather, will be a house about 10 miles from town. It will be near the General's and occupied by Co. Tex Lee, Ike's American aide, Larry, Dick, Snuffy, Leo and me.

Today was a busy one for me. I got back from Paris at 8:30 (more about that in a minute) and at 10 was flying to a place near Le Havre where 40,000 American repatriates are waiting to go home.

Liberated G. I.s Are Sped Home By Eisenhower

He Tells Them of Order to Load Ships to the Full, Bunking Men in Shifts

By Charles F. Kiley
"Stars and Stripes" staff writer

ST. VALÉRY EN CAUX, France, May 22.—General Dwight D. Eisenhower told more than 40,000 liberated American prisoners of war today that he is personally doing everything to get them home as soon as possible.

The supreme commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, addressing his audience over a hastily constructed public-address system from a position atop a truck, said he had issued orders for ships carrying former prisoners to the United States to be loaded to capacity, even to the extent of having men share individual beds and sleep in shifts, in order to fulfill their wishes of getting home soon, "even if we have to swim."

The repatriates—about 40,000 enlisted men and 3,500 officers—were captured from two months to two years ago in Sicily, Italy, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. Some have been awaiting shipment home for three weeks, others for only a few days. They represent the 8th, 9th and 15th Air Forces and practically every combat ground force that was in action.

In his address, Eisenhower said he felt sure there wasn't one among them "who has forgotten we are still at war with Japan."

"We are doing everything in our power to get you out of here and back home to see your families," he added. "But there is a great deal of activity now in progress to take care of the war with Japan, and if we can't supply the shipping for you immediately, it is only because we must also think of your fellow-soldiers fighting in the Pacific."

"Speaking for every one in America, I want to express our gratitude to you all for defeating Germany. You men carried the ball for us, and we will not forget it."

Eisenhower was accompanied by Senators Burton K. Wheeler, Democrat, of Montana; Albert W. Hawkes, Republican, of New Jersey; E. W. McFarland, Democrat, of Arizona, and Homer Capehart, Republican, of Indiana, together with Major General F. E. Stoner, War Department representative with the Federal Communications Commission, and Paul Porter, chairman of the E. C. C. The Congressional group, which is in Europe to study world-wide communications system, had called on the General this morning and was invited to accompany him on his visit here.

Eisenhower spoke with at least 100 men during his visit, joined one group at lunch and, with the Congressional visitors ate with them in a field tent.

Before he spoke he was given a thunderous ovation by the soldiers and when a second roar went up after the General motioned for quiet, he said: "Say, I'm just a G. I., not a movie star."

The General took four Senators with him, including the old isolationist, Burton K. Wheeler of Montana.

Just now, I'm a tired cookie.

About Paris...

I drove down yesterday in the rain to see Benny off and to see Col. Eldridge about the plan to bring me to Paris as managing editor. Since I'm still here you can understand I was successful. Benny was to leave early this morning from Paris to Le Havre. Last night there was a small farewell time in a club near the office. I stayed until 1:30, then left because I had to start back here at 6:30.

My talk with Eldridge went something like this...

I asked what the plan was and he told me. After 15 minutes, I convinced him I ought to stay where I was, mainly because I had enough points to get a discharge and if it should be sudden he would only have to break in another man.

While in Paris, I met Morrow and Bob Wood both of whom had just arrived back. Morrow now is going to try and get out of the Army under the 40-year rule. Eldridge was very decent to Bob Wood, who is going to get his wish and go to London. Incidentally, Bob Moora, is is very solid with Eldridge, is to be a captain shortly. I believe he wants to stay "in" as long as he can. There was nothing new on the report he was going to London and be married.

The setup on *Stars and Stripes* now as I can tell is that Eldridge may soon push Goodfriend out of the picture and take over. There is a considerable shortage of personnel on all editions but Eldridge told me under no conditions would he hold up a man's discharge when it came, even if he has to put out "two-page" papers.

Andy stayed with me in the hotel room I always have reserved in Paris and said he expected to leave for the C.B.I. [China Burma India Theater of War] in a day or so.

I'm sorry I waited so long to tell you that I got three of your letters while in Paris, the ones of May 14, 16 and 17, including the letter from Ray Roche and the others you enclosed. Angel, you shouldn't fret about your foot. Just take care of it, and I hope you have been to a doctor. Not that it's serious, but you shouldn't doctor those things yourself. I had to smile while you wondered where you got it. It starts with not drying your feet completely after your showers. The skin dries and cracks and leaves it open for possible infections. It's an uncomfortable thing to have, I know, but with proper care (a doctor's) you can get rid of it quickly.

Not long ago I heard of a WAC who was never out of Paris who was in the hospital with trench foot, as bad as any soldier ever got up front. And the doctors diagnosed it as a severe case of trench foot. So, don't worry and hurry up and get it well.

Darling, I can't imagine why you didn't get any mail for two weeks. Gosh, during the surrender excitement I even found time to write a couple of times and have been writing consistently since I've been on this job.

I'm wondering what kind of stories are circulating which would cause the Asheville Citizen to call Mom. Perhaps they simply remembered I took an Asheville honeymoon over to "my house."

About that perfume for El, I'll have to wait until I get to Paris again, which may not be for along time. Moreover, I hesitated to send any by mail because I heard of too many cases where the stuff was broken up in transit. I'd have to wait until someone was going home. Another item is that perfume in Paris now is sky high, sky, sky high, in fact. But I'll try, although I doubt if she'll get it for her birthday.

You wondered if I was in London with the General. No, I didn't go. He went over with Gen. Bradley to see Churchill on secret business and took in a show with his son while he was there. That's how the news got out.

I see you are thinking about that second honeymoon, too. It has been on my mind for ages. I know Lake George and can say it's swell. But, we'd need a car up there.

I've thought of Asheville and Mom, Florida with Lee and Harry, but darling, this time I'd like just the two of us to be somewhere all alone. I'm sure that's what you want. If I could get John's car I could do a lot but I wouldn't ask him for it for a month. As soon as that honeymoon does develop, I'd like to spend just a couple of days with Pop and another couple with Mom. I really do want to see her shortly after I get back, hon.

Maybe we can work it all in, or would you rather we just closed ourselves out from the world for 30 days as soon as possible? You're the boss! I know you are saying, "Now, why does he leave these decisions up to me all the time?" It's because I love you and adore you, beautiful!

Now, for a couple of items I wanted to mention ages ago.

1. I received the 'jamas from Earl and have worn both. They were just right, angel.
2. A week or so ago I also received a package with the toothbrushes, toothpaste, shaving cream, candy, etc. I kept remembering it, except when I wrote. The toothbrushes, especially, were timed perfectly.

Bob Hope's program is on the radio now and someone is singing, "I Love You More Than You'll Ever Know." I'd like to say that's what is in my heart but I know you do know how very much I love you, Billee, dearest. So, goodnight for now until I write from Frankfurt. Haven't been there since October 4, 1943. Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

PS: Getting rid of some things during this move, I sent a lot of your letters to John, together with some papers and pictures. When I write to him next, I'll have him give the pictures to you. I meant to send them to you but I addressed the envelope to him at a time when I was addressing the other packages and didn't realize it until I had mailed them. One of the pictures is an autographed portrait of the General. When I asked him for it, he laughed and said I scared him for a moment. He thought I was going to ask him for a discharge. Should have asked him for that, too. He could only say, "no."

May 23, 1945—New York

Darling

You look so wonderful and I know the General's diet must be agreeing with you. Honest, hon, you look positively blooming. Teasing you, as usual.

What wonderful pictures for our album. The Russians look quite gay. Every time I think of all you've done the last few months I have to pinch myself and say, "is that my husband?"

We've heard rumors of the pending trip to Washington but I brushed it aside as out of this world. Don't know, now... could be, except you don't know the telephone number... WAtkins 9-560... just in case. By the time you get to call, it'll be a case of "Billee doesn't live here any more" if Mr. & Mrs. Price decide to take up residence once more at 56 7th Avenue.

The apartment positively shines, it's so clean. You would have laughed to have seen us washing the kitchen walls and then we scrubbed the living room floor ending up in the middle instead of a doorway like a couple of dumbbells but we had fun doing it. Tonight we decided to sew... most all the cleaning is done. All we have to do now is wash the draperies, etc.

Ray will be delighted with the flag and Father John with the cigarettes and book. You're really collecting. Please, hon, though don't spend a lot of money on stuff to bring home from Paris... promise me. I know you love me and I love to be shown it, too, but this is different. It's all so ghastly expensive.

Marg was in this evening. She attended a Press Conference with Russ to see General Hodges. One of the photographers had seen Andy just two days before in Paris. That's exciting. Marg's Junior League in Albany have asked her to give a talk on the *Stars and Stripes* at their forthcoming meeting. Rita called today to tell us she's going home and that definitely she's going to have a baby. Told Jane it wouldn't have happened if Earl hadn't gotten the extra week when his orders were extended. That's what I call a lucky break.

I feel so good inside. El called and told me that when Benny came I could pack my bag and take up residence at 195. Isn't that super swell of them to want me? It all depends on what Jane and Benny will do. My job finishes around the 15th of June and if I thought perhaps you'd be home say a month later I wouldn't get involved in another job. I hope I can know something definite by that time.

It's such a wonderful night out. I walked over to Wanamakers to get us a pattern. The moon was out and just enough breeze to make it nice.



Charles (right) with Russian photographers at Templehof airport, during the Berlin trip. Also Eisenhower's co-pilot, Dick Underwood (4th from left) and Leo Moore (center). May 8, 1945.

A small story of yours in the Tribune tonight about the General's visit to the departing G.I.'s... a nice big byline, too. Jane said she waved it all over Newsweek today saying she lived with your wife. That sounds awfully good, darling... "your wife."

Your letters have sounded so good. I know you're enjoying the work and that's so good. I can't wait to hear about the banquet and all the things you haven't told me but most of all I can't wait to see you. I feel I'm jumping to conclusions in hoping you will share Benny's good fortune but I guess it's catching... Jane's happiness. Just can't help it but don't worry about me. Deep down I think it will be a little while yet. Of course, we have been looking at men's clothes but mostly for Jane I've been doing that.

It's unbelievably wonderful to think Benny is coming home to stay. No more goodbyes, white shirts, every night to have him there and wake up with him in the morning.

Lights out and Jane is crawling into bed and I haven't even showered. Wait for me, and put me to bed nice. I love you so much.... so very much and I miss you such a lot. Love me, darling.

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

May 30, 1945—New York

Darling,

It's been a very long day for us. Quite active, too, since neither of us had to work we decided to get some air and sunshine so we went to Rye for the afternoon. I'm not sure it was worth all the shoving and pushing but anyway we had sun. It was a bit cool for swimming so we just donned our swim suits and didn't go near the water. Of course, in spots now I'm a nice lobster color, however it doesn't hurt so I don't mind.

Jules Grad came by last evening and caught me in the dish pan. A very nice guy. He told us all the little things we wanted to know about you. He delivered the shoes. I love them, darling. You think

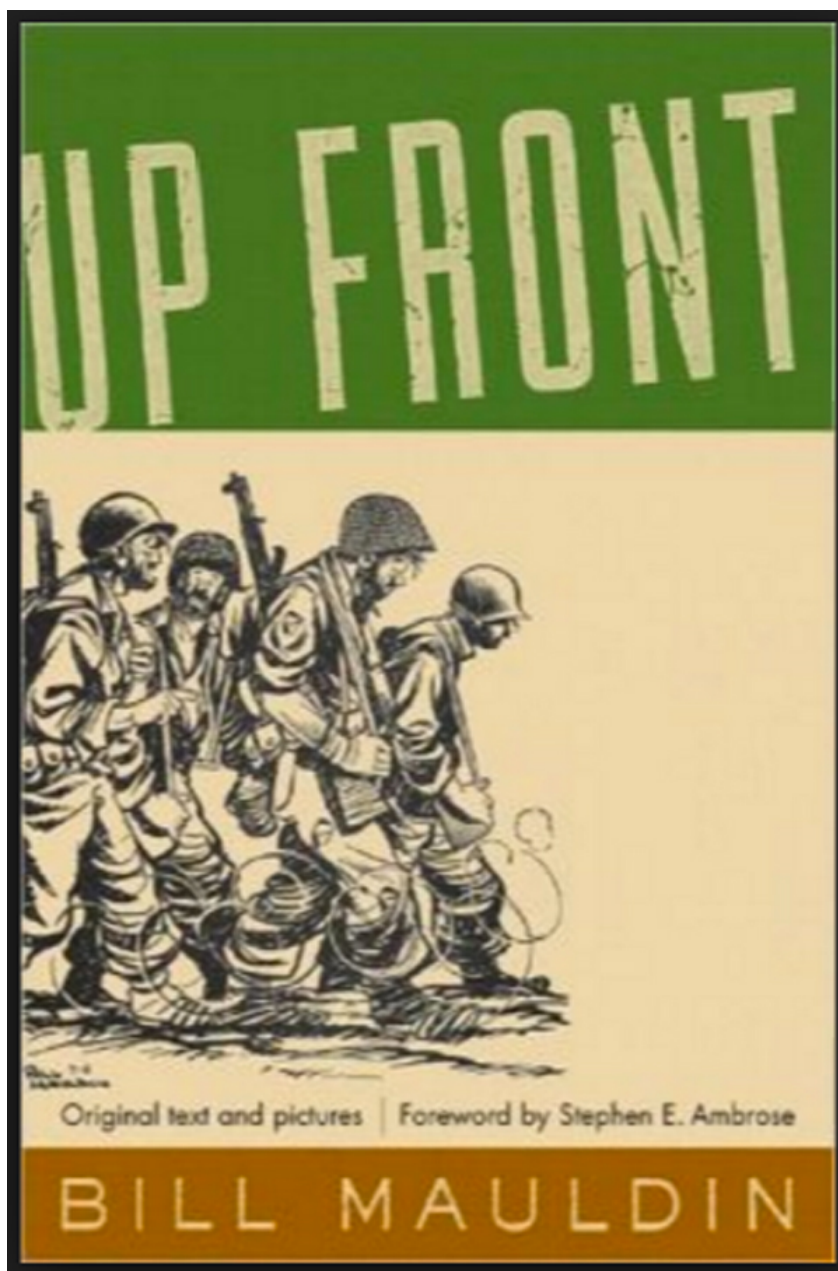


This clipping is another from the Asheville Citizen-Times, but it must have been the same story that appeared in the Tribune.

of everything, don't you, even names for them. Bless you, darling. Jules couldn't quite catch the significance of them being named and I didn't bother to enlighten him. I understand he beat a letter home telling him his fiancé was marrying someone else. What a shame. Seems as if I'm the only one who held out in this organization except Tim.. what's his name from Boston... have it on the end of my pen but it won't write. Jules told us he plans to be discharged in Paris and take a six month vacation traveling around Europe, then he plans on working for the Paris Herald. He told us, too, that Benny plans to work for the Herald, too.

He mentioned your collaborating on a book with him. Golly, hon, you're going to be busy writing. One with Earl and one with Jules. I told the latter that he'd have to write it here because I thought you wanted to come home. He stayed for an hour then adjourned to Bucknell's. He invited me to dinner some night.

Marg phoned as we were leaving today and said Andy had cabled he was leaving for China. He sent the manuscript to her for the book, and said he wasn't submitting it to the War Department... that they hoped to be civilians before publication. They'd still have to have it censored, civilians or not, wouldn't they?



"Up Front" was a best-seller in 1945, but not what you might expect to see in "Ladies Home Journal."

Jane still isn't sleeping. Don't know what I'm going to do with her if Benny doesn't arrive soon.

I got excited at first because I thought you might be on the way soon, too, but I've calmed down to a slow trot now. I think it will be several months before that will happen.

Jules said that he and Bucknell were to meet Eisenhower when he came to the States. I saw an item in today's paper that he'd be here approximately a month from now, and that Russian negotiations had delayed him. Jules mentioned that he had expected to be here for the West Point graduation.

I read a part of Bill Mauldin's book in this month's Ladies Home Journal. Seems to me it's the best I've read yet of any of the war books. I'll save it for you and also see if I can get a copy as soon as it's published.

We've been trying to find a place for Jane and Benny to spend a vacation at. Marg was here the other night and gave us the names of several places I wrote to. However they are all in Vermont, Mass. and New Hampshire and I'm

afraid it would be too cool for swimming until late July and August. We're going to try the Poconos.

We were busy sewing again tonight. I've neglected mine the last few days since I cooled off and have concentrated on helping Jane. She bit off a little more than she is able to take care of.

I haven't had a letter from Mom in nearly two weeks. Guess she's busy entertaining Warren. I do hope he isn't worrying her too much. She forgets he's grown up and been on his own for some time.

I've been trying to figure out where we'll live when you come home. I dislike the idea of your commuting, yet I hate living right in New York. Besides, it's so expensive. Have you had any thoughts long those lines? I know you don't want to live in Jersey City any more than I do. I'm afraid I'm a country girl at heart, hon. Makes me mad... all the new places are so far out. There's still North Arlington and I could put our name on that waiting list out there. Wouldn't do any harm. Always something to think about, isn't there?

I forgot Jules delivered your letter, too. A bit old but I didn't care. The "snack bar" explains your appearance in the picture... so healthy looking. I'd better start eating to keep up with you. Mrs. K. is down to her usual 115 again, doctor's scale, too. So you needn't look so smug.

I'm in the dressing room, all ready for bed. I'll have to be quiet because I don't want to awaken Jane. I do hope she sleeps all night tonight. They are blowing all the harbor whistles now when the boys arrive at the docks so when I hear them from now on I'll call Jane. I heard them yesterday when those 10,000 arrived. Sounded like VE Day again. Jules came back on a destroyer in ten days. Gee, hon, I hope you're among those lucky enough to fly back because I know yow you'll dread that boat trip again. I'm not too sleepy. Guess I'm a bit too tired. The fresh air and sun made me awfully weary... not used to it. Guess you'd better tuck me in, though. Have to be bright and cheerful to face another day. Hope I have a nice long letter to send me on the way.

I miss you so much, as usual, darling, and love you so, so much more. Keep well and love me.

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

June 3, 1945—New York

My darling,

I've had your most recent letter since Friday but seems we've been busy little bees and this is the first time I've written since Thursday.

Friday we sewed 'till late and then cleaned up the floors, getting ready for the return of the rugs and feel into bed a couple of tired cookies.

We're still awaiting Benny's arrival. Poor Jane is getting in a state and we're trying so hard to get so many things done. There was a story written by him in the Pfungstadt edition dateline May 26 so apparently he hadn't left then.

I can imagine how you must have felt seeing him off. Probably the same way I feel seeing Jane's happiness. Our day will come I feel sure and soon. It just has to.

Marg and Jim Grad came down last evening with the news that definitely you wouldn't come back with the General. Jim is to meet him here and travel cross-country with him during his six weeks' stay so that is that. He took us all to dinner. We had two rye and sodas here and a Manhattan at Lynch's along with some white wine and then ended up with brandy. I was perfectly all right, darling, in fact, disgustingly sober, but I was so ill this morning I just wanted to die. I guess the mixture was too much. We were supposed to go to 195 and I even made apple pies to take over and I couldn't go. I don't know yet how I got up and went to Mass. I think I'll just give up. Makes me so mad at myself to get so ill that way.

El, Bette, Uncle John and the baby came over later in the afternoon. Uncle John didn't stay long... caught a five o'clock train. He spent part of his vacation with Pop. He doesn't look too well. He's quite thin. The girls stayed for supper. Annice was in her glory. She played with my solder doll and I had to keep the music box going. We had jam and crackers. Even though I felt a bit whoozy I enjoyed having them. El is insisting I come and stay there. Pop is quite upset about it for fear I won't feel welcome. I think it's wonderful of them to be so concerned.

I had a letter from Mom Friday. She wants me to come home, of course, but honest, hon, I don't think it would be fair to her. If I went home, I wouldn't work. I'd help her and she'd get the house full of people and knowing Mom, she'd give them meals. First thing I knew you'd arrive in New York and I'd have to leave her in the lurch just as it happened last summer. It isn't fair for her to depend on me for that kind of help and I know I just couldn't go home and not help. It isn't in my makeup.

Perhaps I'm wrong to think you'll be home before the end of summer. Things happen so quickly. Jim Grad said he thought he'd be out in September.

We'll love having the General's picture. Think how thrilled Charles III will be about ten years from now. Maybe the General would have said "yes" to your request for discharge.

Strange going back to Frankfurt after going over on a mission. Your quarters sound as if they will be fine. I'm glad you're having the best of everything while you're waiting. I'm wondering what you'll be doing while the General is here.

Jim Grad said he'd written you a two page letter about me after our thirty minute chat the other night. He's decided we think alike now. He told me about the hour and a half talk you have him about me. Hon, I wish you wouldn't. They probably all leave here disillusioned.

It's raining terrifically out. Really nasty for June weather.

The talk with Eldridge sounds wonderful. I sure hope he keeps his word. Sounds almost too good for brass on the *Stars and Stripes*. I do think you are a bit more optimistic than in previous letters or is that just wishful thinking? I'm glad you talked him out of the magazine editor job. That sounds too darn permanent.

Bob M. cabled to the *Stars and Stripes* to find out from his supposedly ex-wife whether or not he has a divorce so he can marry Edith. Did you say he needed ten points to get out or were you speaking of

Bob Wood? Seems to me he needs more than that. He'll be happy in London. Marg brought us a letter from Joe who sounds so, so unhappy. He wants to try and go to London.

They are trying to put the bureaucrats along the the A.N.S. into barracks. Isn't that priceless? At least it would solve the housing situation but, of course, the idea is being talked down.

Morrow had an opportunity before he left here to get out and refused. They have to have him out now in 90 days if he requests it. Bob's captaincy sounds swell and I'd say a long time coming. He's probably wise to stay in as long as he can.

My foot is nearly better but poor Jane has a touch of it. I feel so badly about that. I've tried to be very careful but I guess it couldn't be helped. Jane tells me she's going to write and tell you how funny I looked a few nights back after our cleaning siege. I'd washed my hair and had that up and white socks on for my foot and a pair of gloves on trying to get my hands back into shape. I must have been a sight.

I must tell you of our little experience Friday night. We waited 'til late to turn the lights out and shake the floor mop out the front window. Jane was shaking it good when the dumb thing came off the stick and landed on the sidewalk below. Since I was in the process of undressing and Jane was already pinned up the the night and had her p.j.s on I was elected to go out and retrieve the mop. I know the elevator man probably thinks I'm wacky because I practically meet myself coming in it was all so fast. Moral: better not shake the mop out on Seventh Avenue, I guess.

Did Jim talk to you about our buying furniture from his father at cost? Sounds very good but I wouldn't buy it sight unseen. Very nice of him to suggest it, I'd say.

I don't think it would be wrong to scout around here and buy El some perfume. Probably wouldn't be according to Hoyle but I imagine it would be less expensive here and she'd be happy over it.

I received answers back from those places Marg recommended and the least expensive one in Woodstock, Vermont was \$6.00 per day a person and the others were \$18.00, \$20.00 and \$24.00 a day per person. Isn't that out of this world? Surely there must be some inexpensive place we could go that would be nice.

Marg said she thought she knew a family in Albany who would rent their summer home in Rensselaerville, the village near Marg's family's home. It's a very small village and there isn't too much of a walk to the lake... a private lake but Marg said she could arrange for us to use it. It is a lovely spot, hon. We can keep it in mind.

I do want to go home, too, to see Mom and arrange about the rest of my things there that we'll need. I think we should have most of the time to ourselves. It may be the only time we will have alone. Maybe Charles III or Elizabeth would put in an appearance and then we'd no longer be just Mr. & Mrs. K., but Mr. & Mrs. K. and family. See what I mean?

Father John goes on his vacation in July for three weeks. You couldn't manage to come home then... because he's going to a lake with eight others, I think, and he could probably go in one of their cars. See if you can't fix it up with the General or somebody.

Will you want me to send another package? I think I will. You'll be needing more necessities like toothbrushes, writing paper and stuff. Do you remember my telling you the little dry cleaner's wife made that for you?

Poor Father John must be bogged down at this stage with all your letters. I must get the other bonds from him and figure up our finances.

You're writing me such nice long letters, hon. Just love them that way.

Uncle John wanted to be remembered to you. He said he's saving you a bottle of scotch. He's so nice, isn't he?

I seem to have covered all the news, darling.

May I just curl up in your lap and have you talk to me? Tell me about today and how much you miss me. Do you love me very much? I'm already to be tucked in, you know. Maybe if I'm good I can curl up over at your house for a little while.

I love you so much, darling, and miss you even more. It just has to be soon. I know I shouldn't be selfish. We've been so very fortunate so many ways, but I can't help wanting you home.

Father John was so glad to know you were at Henri Chappelle on Memorial day. The general was there so I presumed you were there, too. It was good it worked out that way because Frankfurt is quite a distance.

I'd better let you tuck me in. I love you.

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

June 6, 1945—New York

Darling,

Don't know why I put "New York" up there. Been writing so many requests for information about resorts, etc., I can do it in my sleep now. Haven't received anything encouraging.

Today is Jane's birthday. We're waiting now for Marg and her mother and sister to come. I baked Jane a chocolate cake and believe it or not El was able to get us some steaks. Doesn't sound like much but it's been a bit difficult to get meat recently so that's to be appreciated. Poor Jane went to the dentist today and I'm afraid she couldn't appreciate the steak very much.

I went over to 195 and finished two aprons for Jane's birthday. Bought her some super socks, too. She bought some red loafers and she saw some argyle socks she liked last week, so that's her present.

We've been hoping all day Benny would arrive. Jane really expected him today. I'm afraid she's upset about it. Since it's her birthday it seemed like it could be today when we know that it will be soon. Joe said in his letter to Jane today that he was sure you'd be on the way soon.

Jane said in Newsweek that it was hinted general Eisenhower might be made Chief of Staff and Marshall would be retired.

El still hasn't heard from Tom yet. It's a month now. I hope it's good news. She's getting upset about it now. I can just hear you shaking your head, saying "these women," but I guess we can't help it.

You should hear Annice say "Billee Kiley." Comes out very strange but I know that's what she says. She says so many things now. She'll be able to carry on a conversation with you when you come home.

Marg, her mother and Susie just left so we are in the process of going to bed. Jane was delighted with her socks and aprons. She insisted that I not bake her a cake but I did... just a little one and had it on top of the cupboard 'til tonight but she found it. It wasn't too good. I've baked better ones. Mrs. Howard is nice but I can see where Andy wouldn't get along with her. She is very proper. I really like her very much and I can't imagine why because usually those kinds of people leave me cold. Susie is cute... very attractive with ideas of her own.

It's Wednesday, darling and no word from you. You'll be glad to know that the money orders Joe sent arrived and are in the bank so we can breathe a bit easier. I hope no one will get in trouble. Joe's letter was opened by the censor since he didn't write anyone's name on it. He wasn't too careful about what he said. I'll send the letter to you along with this. I'd hate to have him involved. Guess nothing will come of it, I hope. He said in Jane's letter that Earl expected to get out, that he'd been declared "surplus" and Hod is expected about the tenth en route to the Pacific. He's a louse, I think. Did you know his wife is expecting?

Charlie White is married to "some beat up proposition he knew before the war. She makes wonderful wisecracks." That's what he wrote to Marg.

Benny is supposed to have left on the 27th so he must be here by now... at least in a day or two at the most. I wish I knew what Mrs. K. was going to do.

I bought a bond for the Seventh War Loan Drive, \$25.00 in Dorothy Jean's name. Thought I may as well get it now and we wouldn't have to worry about it at Christmas time. I told Dot of our plan the last time I saw her. I'll like to buy another for us. We'll see.

Today the sun shone which is really an item since it's practically decided to hibernate or something for so long. It's the coldest June I ever saw.

I've been working in the regular office this week until the auditors have more work for me to do. Been doing a lot of work for other people that they've been putting off doing for some time. Oh well, I don't mind. Good practice, I guess.

Jane is getting ready to crawl in bed and I'm setting here in my slip. I was waiting for her to shower so now it's my turn.

Marg brought Jane the book, "The Thurber Carnival." Looks amusing.

A year ago tonight I was terribly upset about you because I thought you went in the first day. It was a day I'll not ever forget. They rebroadcast some of the reports today.

Steve Slesinger's secretary called me yesterday for a copy of your original story about Molotoff. I told her she had the only available one, but she said Steve had lost it. Seems A.J. Liebling of the New Yorker has a profile in this week's magazine and he wanted to compare it. Guess he's going to try and prove he "stole" it or something. I think the guy is wacky myself and not as smart as Bud might think he is. [In fact, A.J. Liebling's profile of Molotoff for the New Yorker was inspired by Liebling's visit to Tunisia just after Molotoff's death. "Looking for Mollie (Molotoff)" has been collected in a Library of America volume called "World War II Writings" by Liebling.

Marg received the manuscript of the book [*The Story of the Stars and Stripes* by Rooney and Hutton] and didn't have anything very favorable to say about it. Said it would only be interesting to Stars and Stripes. She's anxiously awaiting Andy's arrival in China or Burma or wherever it is.

I hope there's mail for me soon. Perhaps it wouldn't be a bad idea for you to start addressing mail to 195 'til I know what I'm going to do. I'll be in the neighborhood 'til about the 20th for sure. Then, if there's no more work I'm going to take a week off and stay at 195. While Benny and Jane are in New York I'll be over there, too, for sure.

I'd better make my way to bed. Will you wait 'til I shower, darling? I'm missing you so. The next few days when Benny arrives are going to be difficult. The missing you is going to be worse, I'm afraid. Seems like you should have come together.

I'll toddle off now. could I maybe since I've been pretty good today come over to your house for a little while? I do love you so much.

Keep well, my darling and love me so much.

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

PS: Thought you'd smile at the card, darling. Maybe next year you'll really rate one. Love and kisses, Mrs. K.

June 12, 1945—Frankfurt

Hello sweetheart,

Gosh, it seems ages and ages since my last letters to you. That's because so much has happened in the last few days and I've been kept terribly busy.

First of all, I was finally able to release two stories which I had been working on for almost a month. One of them was on the casualties suffered by Allied ground forces from DDay to VE-Day and the

ETO War Cost Ground Forces 89,477 Killed

By Charles F. Kiley

Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

FRANKFURT-ON-MAIN, Germany, June 6—U.S. ground forces lost men at the rate of 1,527 a day—killed, wounded and missing—in the war against Germany in western Europe from the time they invaded Normandy a year ago today until the cease fire on all fronts was given on May 9, it was revealed today here at Supreme Allied HQ.

The total will be reduced, however, when unreported prisoners of war who have been listed as missing are accounted for. Possibly 15,000 to 20,000 prisoners are included on the list of missing because they were not reported by the Germans in the last few chaotic months.

U.S. casualties for the 337 days of fighting totaled 514,534, of whom 89,477 were killed, 367,180 wounded and 57,877 missing in action. (Accidental deaths in the U.S. in 1942 totaled 93,000, 28,200 of which were caused by motor cars.)

Final figures will be only slightly revised to account for the comparatively few casualties caused since VE-Day by mines and occasional sniping by hostile enemy forces still at large.

The casualty list only includes ground forces in the 6th, 12th and 21st Army Groups, Communications Zone and Advance Section of Communications Zone. It does not include any Air Forces casualties.

The combined British and Canadian casualties in the same period totaled 184,512, including 39,599 killed, 126,545 wounded and 18,368 missing.

The French casualties were 11,080 killed, 45,966 wounded and 4,201 missing for a total of 61,247. The Poles had 1,189 killed, 4,029 wounded and 375 missing for a total of 5,593. The Czechs had 170 killed, 406 wounded and 14 missing for a total of 590. The Belgians had 55 killed, 274 wounded, 35 missing for a total of 364, and the Dutch had 20 killed, 104 wounded and three missing for a total of 127.

This story was picked up by both the NY Times and the Herald Tribune.

60 U.S. Divisions Fought in West

By Charles F. Kiley
Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany, June 7—Sixty U.S. divisions, which comprised the Ground Forces combat strength in the 6th, 12th and 21st Army Groups when the war against Germany ended, included 42 infantry divisions, 15 armored divisions and three airborne divisions, it was disclosed here yesterday.

Total Allied ground strength in the West by armies, corps and divisions at the end of the war were:

U.S.—Five armies, 16 corps, 42 infantry divisions, 15 armored divisions and three airborne divisions.

In addition to the U.S. units were:

Britain—One army, four corps, eight infantry divisions, four armored divisions and two airborne divisions.

Canada—One army, two corps, three infantry divisions and two armored divisions.

France—One army, one corps, eight infantry divisions and three armored divisions.

Poland—One armored division.

The eight Allied armies were the U.S. 1st, 3rd, 7th, 9th and 15th; British 2nd, Canadian 1st and French 1st.

The 42 U.S. infantry divisions were: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 8th, 9th, 26th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 35th, 36th, 42nd, 44th, 45th, 63rd, 65th, 66th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 75th, 76th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 83rd, 84th, 86th, 87th, 89th, 90th, 94th, 95th, 97th, 99th, 100th, 102nd, 103rd, 104th and 106th.

The 15 U.S. armored divisions were: 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 16th and 20th.

The three airborne divisions were: 17th, 82nd and 101st.

Ike, Monty Get Reds' Diamond, Ruby Medal

By GEORGE TUCKER

Frankfurt on the Main, June 10 (AP).—Gen. Eisenhower today received Soviet Russia's highest award, the \$12,000 diamond and ruby Order of Victory, the first non-Russian so honored, and said that the Allies "are going to have peace even if we have to fight for it."

The medal was presented by Marshal Georgi K. Zhukov, commander of Russian occupation forces, who gave a similar one to Field Marshal Sir Bernard L. Montgomery.

Eisenhower declared that the European war just finished had been a holy war—more than any other war in history. In a toast of praise to Zhukov, Eisenhower said:

"Speaking for the Allied forces, I say we are going to have peace even if we have to fight for it. All of us who are right-thinking want the common men of all nations to have the opportunities that we fought to preserve for them."

Staff Sgt. John Schwarz, 37-41 81st St., Jackson Heights, served Zhukov at luncheon and said the marshal had a fighting man's appetite. Pfc. Jack Richard, 141 E. 45th St., New York, served wine. There wasn't a drop of vodka in the house.

Frankfurt was bedecked with

new Russian flags, manufacture hurriedly yesterday by a local sausage factory.

The only correspondent who witnessed the private ceremony in Gen. Eisenhower's office was Sgt. Charles N. Kiley, Jersey City, Stars and Stripes reporter.

From the Daily News. See last paragraph for a mention of Charles' presence at the ceremony.

other on the number of divisions each of the Allied nations had in combat when the war ended. The tougher part of both stories was getting them okayed.

I have since found out that not a single British paper carried the second story, and the reason was plain. The U.S. had five armies, 16 corps, 42 infantry divisions, 15 armored divisions and four airborne divisions as compared with one British army, four corps, eight infantry divisions, three armored divisions and two airborne divisions. It was typically "yellow" British journalism not to use the story.

On Sunday, Marshal Zhukov and a Russian party visited the general here and it kept me busy all day. There was a presentation of the Soviet Order of Victory (platinum, diamonds and rubies said to be worth anywhere from \$15,000 to \$100,000) by Zhukov to Ike and Montgomery.

Then there was an air show of 1,700 planes, a luncheon banquet and entertainment. Yesterday we flew to London where the general today received the city's highest honor, the Freedom of the City of London, in a most impressive and colorful ceremony.

It was all Britain paying tribute to the general and as he was driven in an open, black, horse-drawn carriage through the streets there were tens of thousands packed along the route.

He was only the fifth American ever to receive the "Freedom. The others were U.S. Grant, Teddy Roosevelt, Gen. Pershing and a philanthropist named [George] Peabody.

All of the officials were in their fur-trimmed scarlet and blue robes, some wore the old-style wigs and befitted their position.

The honored guest list in the ancient Guildhall was something... Prime Minister and Mrs. Churchill, Ambassador Winant, past and present members of the British Cabinet, all of the top British and American military figures.

I thought the general would break down when he started to speak during the ceremony, he was that much overcome.

Our party went from here to London in four planes. I was in Gen. Morgan's plane. He's a British member of the staff. Now that the boss's plane has been remodeled, there are only 12 seats in it.

We arrived back here at 7:45 tonight.

London looked good after the mess of what used to be cities in Germany. I stopped in the office and had dinner last night with Bob Wood. Moreover, I slept in my old bed in Clifford's Inn, too. One of the two fellows now occupying the apartment was out of town.



TO A VICTOR, LONDON'S THANKS: London crowd hailed Gen. Eisenhower as he arrived in a horse-drawn carriage, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder at his side, to receive the Freedom of the City in a ceremony at Guildhall at which time he was presented with the curved sword the Duke of Wellington carried into the Battle of Waterloo.

London's Thousands Turn Out to Honor Ike

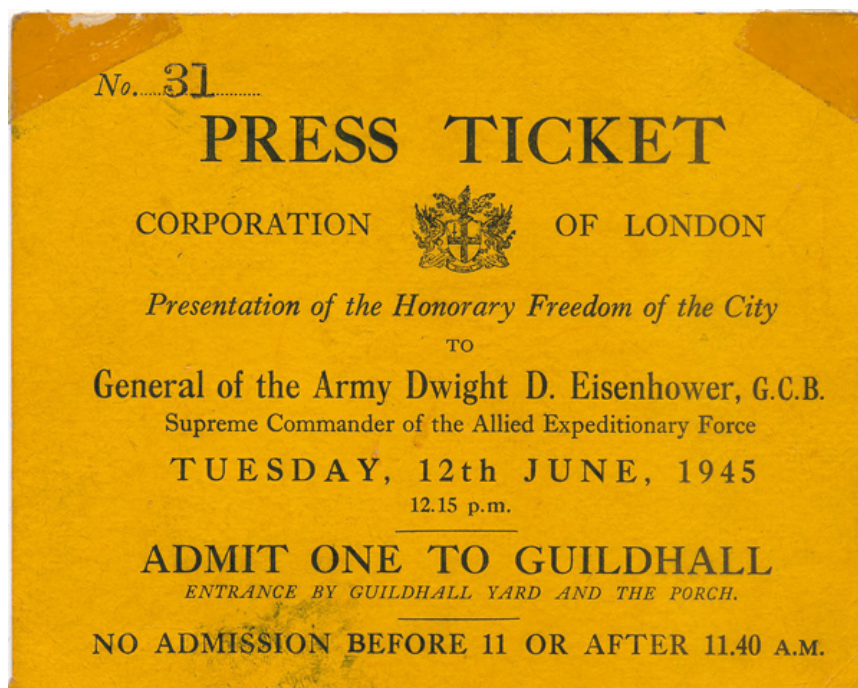
By Charles F. Kiley
Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

Great Britain paid tribute yesterday to an American who successfully led the Allies to victory over Germany by conferring on Gen. Eisenhower the Freedom of the City of London, the highest honor in the capital city of the British Empire and one which had been previously given to but four other Americans.

It was the people of London who honored the Supreme Commander, but it was the voice of the British Empire which hailed the Allied commander as he drove through the City in a horse-drawn carriage to the ancient Guildhall where the "freedom" ceremony took place.

Tens of thousands of persons lined the streets as Eisenhower and his deputy Supreme Commander, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, were driven in a carriage escorted by mounted police from Temple Bar to the Guildhall. There Eisenhower was welcomed by the Lord Mayor of London and more than 100 distinguished guests, including Prime Minister Churchill, U.S. Ambassador John G. Winant, past and present members of the British Cabinet, members of the House of Lords, foreign diplomats, Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, chief of the Imperial General Staff, and many other high-ranking British and American officers.

A "token" sword, used by the Duke of Wellington in battle more than 100 years



I also spent a little time with Mrs. Frost and an hour or so with Alf and Gertie. Bob Moora is over there for a week and we had a drink together in the Lamb and Lark. We could have turned the clock back two years and set the same scene. It was "after hours", about 11:30 and there we were as of old, Alf and Gertie, Bob and I and Gertie's sister, Nettie. It was Gertie's birthday, too, and of course she had to get a little "fuzzy" as she calls it to mark the occasion. I had four scotches and left about midnight.

Your letter of June 3 came Monday morning and I saved it until we were on the plane before I read it. You asked me not to rave about you to people like I did to Jim Grad because they may be “disillusioned.” Listen, my gorgeous glamour-puss, I’ll continue to rave and rave and rave about you as long as I have breath in me. Do you mind?

More than that, those who have met you encourage me all the more. I haven’t heard one yet who didn’t say in effect, “My boy, you have one girl in a million.” Naturally, my answer to that is, “Whaddya mean, million? You can multiply that by 1,000 and be a little closer to the figure.”

No, angel, if it’s all the same to you, I’ll just go on telling the world that my wife is incomparable, beautiful, lovely, superb, soft, tender, loving, thoughtful, considerate and one whom I’ll never stop adoring. If I have omitted anything, simply add it on.

I know what you mean about not being up to moving back with Mom, hon. But, I won’t try and help you make up your mind. I know if she needed you, really needed you, you would go. But, always do what you think best.

About your new living conditions, I gathered you wanted to stay in New York, perhaps live with Marg. I’m sure Pop and El will understand when you tell them. I know Pop loves you and worries about you as if you were his daughter, sweetheart.

Pop says very little, but speaks so much by his expressions and actions. And I know you couldn’t be closer and dearer to him.

I heard in London today that the N.Y. boys were off per diem. At least they had their choices of barracks or 65 cents a day to live on. It is a pretty awkward position for the married me, if not for all.

I’ll be in Paris in two days, for good, and perhaps they will have done something to ease the situation... maybe pay the men from the petty cash fund.

I’m afraid Jim Grad is going to be disappointed if he hopes to “follow” the general around for six weeks. After the Washington, New York, Kansas City and Abilene celebrations, he is going to take it easy for a month. I doubt if the schedule will be altered.

The Woodstock, Vermont place doesn’t sound too expensive, hon. Six dollars a day per person is damned reasonable, in fact, especially for that section, although before I would even think of going to a resort hotel I would want to talk to someone who had been there.

I know the kind of a place I want to go to, but it would have to belong to someone who would loan it or rent it. Otherwise, if I get home before the summer is over, maybe we can go down and visit Mom for a bit and you can take care of the things you have there at the same time.

But, mostly, I want you and you all alone. Doesn’t that frighten you? To be left all alone with your wolf?

Right now I’m so hungry for you I’d be able to swallow you in big chunks without bothering to digest you.

Day after day after day I miss you more, sweetheart. This morning, walking down Fleet Street toward the Thames I thought back to the days I used to take that walk and dream across the ocean to wonder where you were and what you were doing and wishing you were with me.

And, one of the strangest of all incidents happened this afternoon after the ceremony and while I was in the Times writing my story.

In London for only a day and for the first time since when and there was a telephone call for me.

It was Cliff McIlveen, brother of the Mac I flew with. He has been a PW since about November, 1943 and on his way home. He said while he was in London he thought he'd call me... didn't know I haven't worked out of London since June 1944.

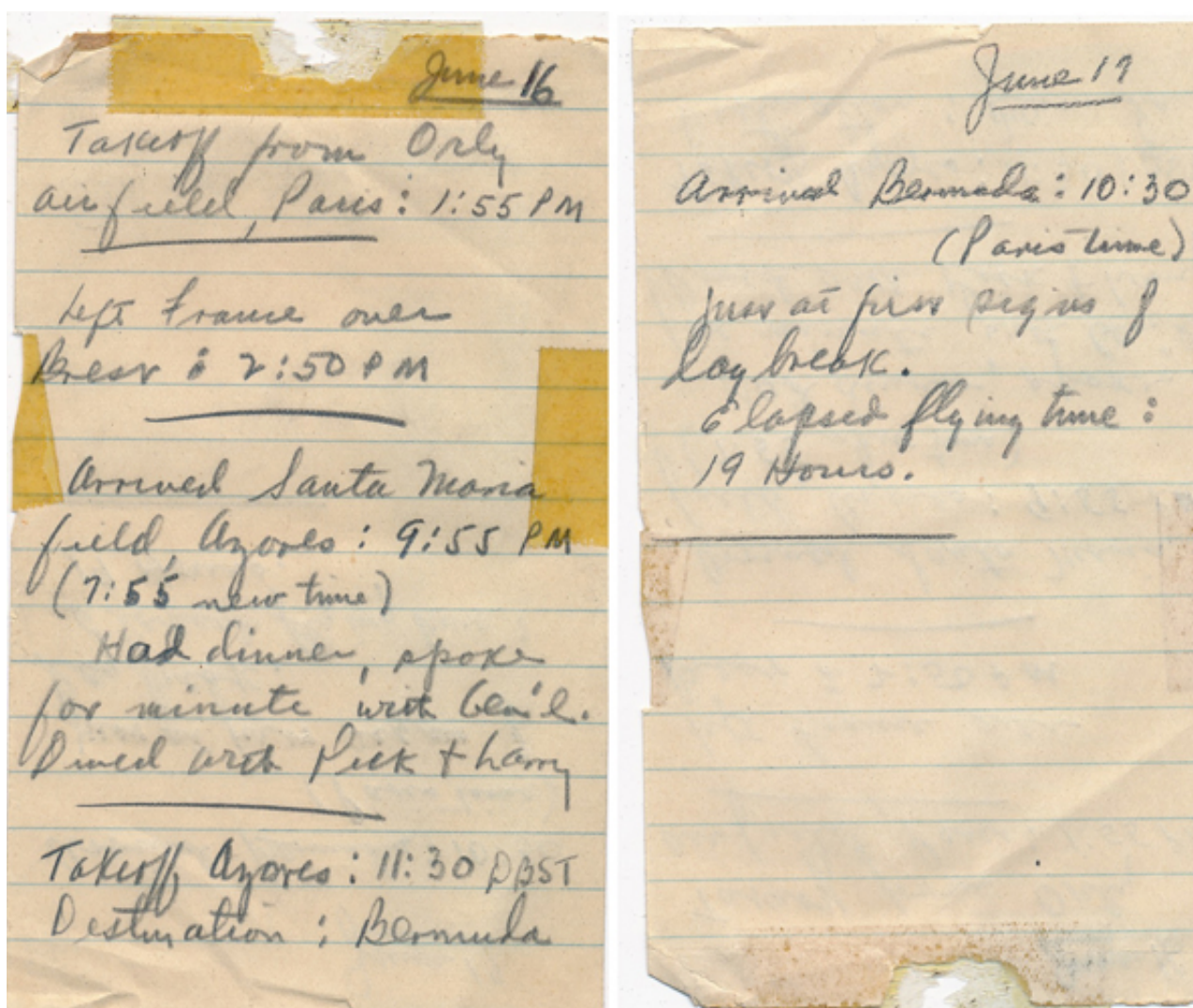
Cliff hadn't had a letter from home in nine months, didn't know any of the details about Mac going down... just that he went. I wanted to see him, if only for a minute he sounded so lonely, but I had to rush to the airfield to be on time for my plane back here.

And now, I believe I'll dream a while of you, angel. You don't mind if I wrinkle my nose at your picture, do you? I can't help but smile at your picture and wrinkle my nose, always wanting it to come to life and wrinkle back.

Keep faith a little while longer, darling. It won't be long, now.

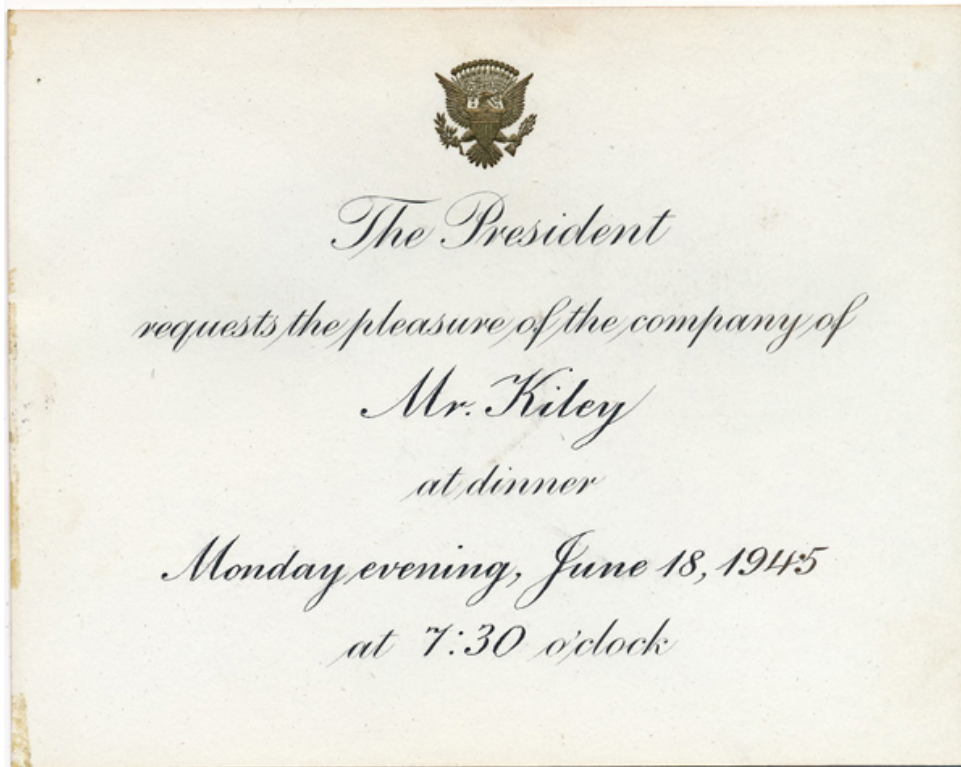
All my love and kisses, forever and always, Charles

PS: Dot's birthday is on the 21st of June.

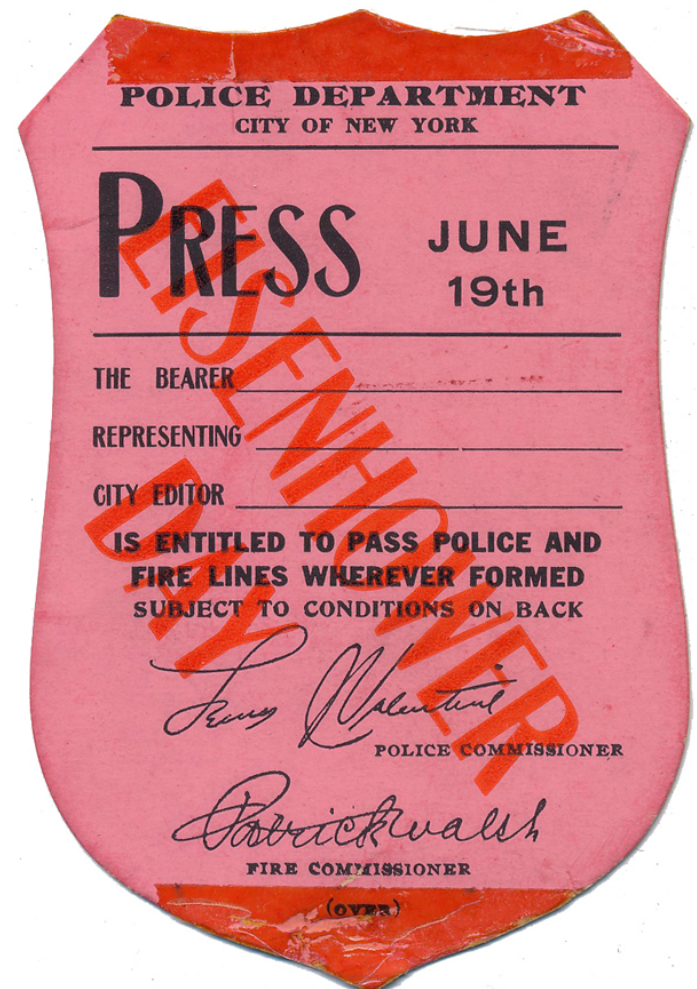
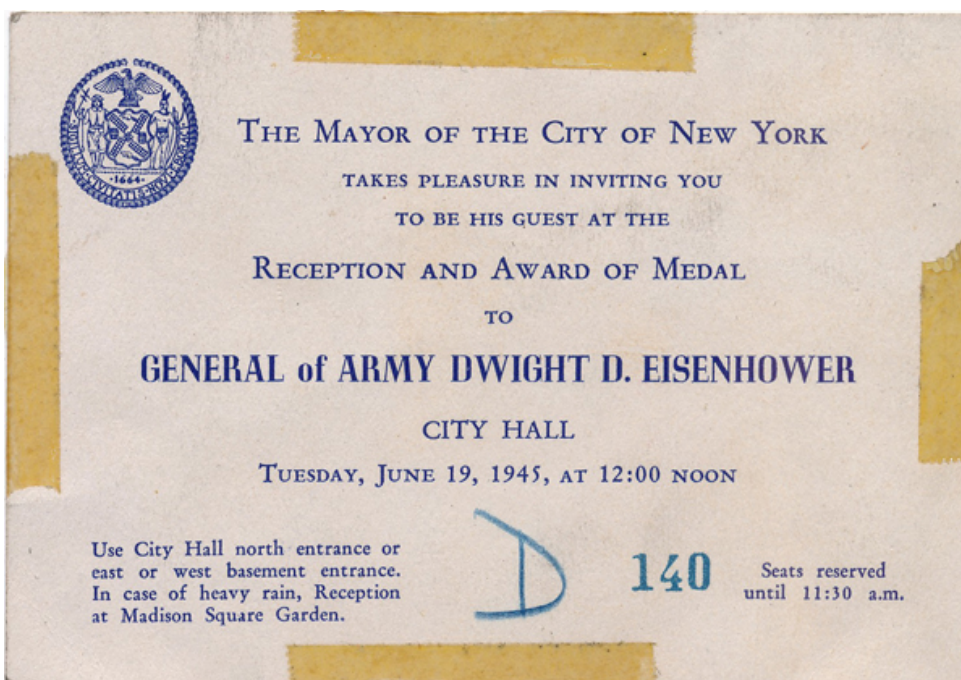


[On June 16, Charles left Paris, accompanying Gen. Eisenhower and staff back to the States. After a stopover in Bermuda, they landed in Washington DC on Monday, June 18.]

Charles' notes made on the trip from Paris to Bermuda.



[That evening, Charles had dinner at the White House with General Eisenhower, and on the following day accompanied him to New York for a day-long celebration in that city, and for his long-awaited reunion with Billee.]



[Billee to Charles at Ft. Dix] June 27, 1945—Jersey City

Hello, darling

Surprised to hear from me? Thought this might be never again but here I am again. Just can't stay away from you somehow or other. Just finished dashing off Mom a letter. Thought I'd better take advantage of the time. I finished doing a stack of mending and fixing your trousers. I didn't seem to accomplish much today what with spending the morning over at Kay's doing for her and the housework here but now I'm ready for the sack and I'm not kidding. Jeepers, hon, but I miss you. You might just as well be in Frankfurt as at Ford Dix except I know that by the end of the week you'll be home and that keeps me sane.

El was so relieved to get her letter today... says she feels like a new person or something. I know what that kind of anxiety can do for you.

Sgt. Kiley, Only GI at Unconditional Surrender of Germany, Discharged Here

July 6, 1945



POST Photo by Sgt. Alfred D. Boehme

Sgt. Kiley, left, points to the Fort Dix POST extra which came out on V-E Day and tells T/5 Charles Ruber, right, and Pfc. Robert E. Ingrahm, both being discharged under the point system, how the surrender took place. Kiley was the only GI present at the signing of the historic surrender of the German Army.

The only GI to attend the unconditional surrender of the German High Command to the Allies was discharged this week at the Fort Dix Separation Center under the Army point system.

He is S/Sgt. Charles Kiley, a Stars and Stripes reporter, who was selected to represent a pool of GI newspapermen to attend the historic surrender of the Nazi war machine which took place at Supreme HQ, AAF, Reims, France on May 7.

As the only reporter to cover the preliminary negotiations, Sgt. Kiley together with two Army photographers, T/4 Thomas Meslin, Orange, N. J. and T/Sgt. Jack Howell, Kansas City, later were assigned to supply data of the meeting to 16 war correspondents who were flown in from Paris. The signing of the surrender was at 2:41 a. m.

After receiving the information the correspondents were flown back to Paris pledged to secrecy until the official simultaneous announcements were made from the capitals of the big three. This was scheduled for 9 a. m. EWT, May 9.

Following the signing, Sgt. Kiley together with all the high ranking Allied officers flew to Berlin for the official ratification of the surrender by the Russian representative, Marshall Zhukov at 11:30 p. m., May 8.

Sgt. Kiley, formerly a reporter for the Jersey Journal, went overseas in October, 1942 with the 64th Division and joined the staff of Stars and Stripes six months later.

*From the Fort Dix News,
July 6, 1945*

I forgot to tell you that Ruth Rommel called last night and recommended Onewa Lodge at the Poconos in Pennsylvania. She'd heard that we were looking for a place to go so we talked for about a half hour... various topics. First time I ever talked to her on the phone... no second time. I answered one time at Dot's when she was calling her.

It must be a strange feeling ending up where you started out and especially seeing so many familiar faces. I'm glad it's like that because then the days will go by quicker.

This rain is making me think you don't have a raincoat. I meant to ask, too, if you were having to do any detail or such. Wouldn't it be awful if you drew KP? At this stage of the game, that would be irony.

I miss your shoulder next to mine saying my prayers and I miss being tucked in very much. I just miss you, darling. Do you mind it very much? I wish I could run down and spend the day with you or something. I'd love to bring you a clean shirt. You have six downstairs all freshly ironed. I just knew you should have taken another one. You're probably shaking your head and laughing at me worrying about a shirt but I don't want you going around like an orphan.

I don't even know if this will reach you. Just taking a chance but I thought you might like to get a letter just for old times said if nothing else.

I love you so much, and I wish there weren't seventy miles between us. I wish I wasn't any further away than the tip of your nose. Goodnight, darling.

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

Section 1

Untitled