

**MS
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00615B**

William and Wilma Brown World War II Letters and Photographs

Gift of Jeff and Bernadette Brown, 2020 and 2022

Dates: 1942-1946

Extent: 3 boxes; 0.53 metres

Biographical Note:

William “Bill” Eberts Kenneth Brown (December 8, 1917-April 15, 1948) was born and raised in Toronto, Ontario. He graduated with an engineering degree from the University of Toronto. During the war, Bill served as a Lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Engineers, where his chief function was building Bailey Bridges, used to transport Allied troops over rivers when retreating Germans had bombed the original structures. He also worked on constructing roads that had been bombed out, but much preferred the challenges of bridge work.

Wilma Marion Brown (née Perry) (March 11, 1921- November 20, 2003) was born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She received training in nursing at the University of Manitoba and served as a Lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Medical Corps, where she was a Physio and Occupational Therapist.

Bill and Wilma met aboard the S.S. Bayano, a 6800-ton banana boat converted to transport troops from Halifax, Nova Scotia to Britain, in November 1943. The Bayano travelled in a convoy with corvette escorts due to U-Boat attacks and had been retrofitted with a two-pound gun on the stern and a machine gun on each side. The boat carried approximately 100 Canadian Army troops, of which 25-year-old Bill Brown was one, and a handful of Canadian Army nurses, including 22-year-old Wilma Perry. The journey took upwards of two weeks to complete, during which time Bill and Wilma met over bridge games, likely meaning they were playing partners.

Bill and Wilma were stationed in different parts of Europe but stayed in contact by mail over the next two years and occasionally managed to arrange to meet on leave in England. The letters do not specifically state their postings as such information was forbidden in wartime, and each letter had to be stamped as cleared by the Censor to be delivered. Wilma’s postings included Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, England, and Italy. Wilma and Bill were engaged to be married on May 4th, 1945, four days before VE day.

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William and Wilma Brown World War II Letters and Photographs

Most of the correspondence in this collection consists of letters written from Bill to Wilma almost daily in the months following their engagement, from May to July 1945. The daily letters ceased on July 22, 1945, as Bill was sent to convalesce after his bout of tonsillitis at the Roman Way Convalescent Hospital, where Wilma had recently been stationed. The couple were married in Chichester, England, with an honour guard of R.C.E. officers on August 25, 1945. Bill served 1,500 days before being discharged on March 16, 1946.

Upon their return to Canada in 1946, the newlyweds settled in Val d'Or, Quebec, where Bill worked as an engineer at the East Sullivan Gold Mine. They had one child, a son named Jeff. Bill was killed in a mine accident on April 15, 1948. Wilma continued her education, receiving a Ph.D. and excelling in her career as a Professor of Anatomy at the University of Toronto, where she retired from in 1985. She passed away November 20, 2003, after never remarrying.

Scope and Content:

Contains series:

- 1) Photographs and miscellaneous items
- 2) Photo albums & bible
- 3) Correspondence

Custodial history: Donated to the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library by Jeff and Bernadette Brown in 2020 (letters) and 2022 (photographs and photo albums).

Notes:

Full transcriptions of the letters are available.

Abbreviations:

Shorthand notations are used throughout the finding aid:

ALS - Autograph letter signed

ANS - Autograph note signed

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William and Wilma Brown World War II Letters and Photographs

Language: English

Restrictions on access: Open

SERIES 1: Photographs and miscellaneous items			
BOX: FOLDER	TITLE	CONTENTS	DATE(S)
1:1	Holiday Greetings Card	Card from Free Press, signed Fred Harper.	1941
1:2	Training.	Loose scrapbook page. 4 photographs of training activities.	194[?]
1:3	Brockville, Ontario.	Loose scrapbook page. 3 photographs of Brown and others (military) in Brockville, Ontario.	February-April 1942
1:4	John Coumbs	2 photographs of John Coumbs, Royal Canadian Engineer.	1942-1943
1:5	Petawawa and Brockville O.T.C.	10 photographs of military training in Petawawa and Brockville.	1942-1943
1:6	Bailey Bridge	20 photographs of construction and dedication of Bailey Bridges, in Petawawa Ontario, and Holland.	1942-194[?]
1:7	Battle of the Bridges/Bridges Vital to Winning Campaign/Bridges Vital to War	3 Canadian Army Overseas Photographs with captions, depicting the official opening of a Bailey/Walsh Bridge in Holland, featuring General Crerar, First Canadian Army Commander.	March 28, 1945
1:8	Statement of War Service Gratuity	Department of National Defense, Statement of War Service Gratuity for William Eberts Kenneth Brown	1946

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SERIES 2: Photo albums & bible			
BOX: FOLDER	TITLE	CONTENTS	DATE(S)
2:1	“Army Life, Canada-England”	Photo album by Wilma Brown, featuring images of life around army hospitals and on leave.	March 1943- July 1944.
2:2	“France, England, Italy, England, Holland, England.”	Photo album by Wilma Brown, featuring images of life around army hospitals and on leave.	August 1944- August 1945
2:3	Holy Bible.	Front fly-leaf inscribed “this was the official Bible of the Fifth Fold Company, Royal Canadian Engineers, during the Second World war, 1939-1945. W.E.K. Brown, England, 15 th January 1946.”	1946

SERIES 3: Correspondence. Full transcriptions available.			
BOX: FOLDER:	AUTHOR	CONTENTS	DATE(S)
3:1	Bill Brown	Poem “The Zombie: Answer to a Question.” By Lt W.E.K. Brown, First Canadian Army, Fifth Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers.	1944
3:2	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Hopes she arrived at her destination safely, discusses possibility of leave, describes a few days in England, needing to buy a new wallet as his is too small for English notes.	23 November 1943

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3:3	Bill Brown	ALS to Mrs. Eberts Brown, Bill's mother. Written on board ship waiting to go ashore after the Invasion of Normandy. Describes what he can see, confidence that attack will be successful.	6 June 1944
3:4	Bill Brown	ANS to Wilma Perry. Season's greetings postcard.	25 December 1944
3:5	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Describes weather, a nine-day leave in England in January, New Years Eve plans, seeing friends.	24 March 1945
3:6	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Describes returning to camp after getting engaged that day, congratulations from 'the boys', being interrupted by news flashes about surrenders in Germany, Denmark, and Holland.	4 May 1945
3:7	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions drinking with Bus and Fergy, who will be delivering the letter, hoping to arrange a trip to Nijmegen [Holland] and see her, Colonel has decided tomorrow is V Day and they will have a Church parade. ANS in same envelope: sending candies with Bus.	5 May 1945
3:8	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions platoon will have the day off Wednesday, hoping to go to Nijmegen, news that two more German armies have surrendered, mentions playing the piano, doing "tiresome" road work.	6 May 1945
3:9	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions it is VE Day Eve. Discusses how commanding officer mistakenly broke the radio, that road work will continue tomorrow, and disbelief the war is over. Will see Wilma Wednesday in Nijmegen.	7 May 1945

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3:10	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions his High Command gave everyone a half holiday today and a full one tomorrow, listening to Churchill's speech. Looking forward to seeing her tomorrow.	8 May 1945
3:11	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Expresses great disappointment at missing her in Nijmegen [Wilma sent to Brussels], discusses events of day leave. Mentions returning to Nordhorn [Germany] and VE Day celebration on Tuesday night.	10 May 1945
3:12	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions weather, planning an officer's dance in Oldenzaal, rumors that everyone will be home in three months.	14 May 1945
3:13	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Hopes she is settling into new hospital in England, mentions letter from his mother written on VE Day, filling out questionnaire asking next steps in the army, seeing an ENSA show.	15 May 1945
3:14	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions entertainment, filling out a new questionnaire about future in the army, hoping to receive mail from her soon.	16 May 1945
3:15	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions unit censorship is now discontinued, waiting for photographs to be ready, mail not arriving.	17 May 1945
3:16	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Says O.C. has received a letter from her before him, glad she has arrived in England, preparing for party in Oldenzaal.	18 May 1945
3:17	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions still missing mail from her, will be going to the party in Oldenzaal. Discusses how he is now O.C. on road work.	19 May 1945
3:18	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Discusses lack of mail, getting his mother to potentially purchase an engagement ring in Toronto, the party in Oldenzaal.	20 May 1945

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3:19	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Discusses finally receiving four letters from her in the mail, her settling into Sussex, England, the engagement ring, the weather.	21 May 1945
3:20	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions receiving more mail from her, friend Bus returning from leave.	22 May 1945
3:21	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Now receiving regular mail from her again, requests her mother's address. Discusses road work, new schedule with afternoons off, plans for a smoker where he will have to play piano, the arrival of new second-in-command.	23 May 1945
3:22	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Discusses the ENSA show, unit having to attend lectures on future in the army. Mentions plan to turn unit into a 'school' for the troops.	24 May 1945
3:23	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Says he will be teaching Algebra and Physics at the new 'school', mentions today being their third anniversary, getting a new pair of boots.	25 May 1945
3:24	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Discusses engagement ring, general news from friends and possibilities for next leave, drinking with Bus.	26 May 1945
3:25	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions having a hangover, preparing for giving a lecture, attending the smoker tomorrow.	27 May 1945
3:26	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions heading to the smoker, describes the lecture he gave, the weather.	28 May 1945
3:27	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions missing some letters from her, thanks her for photographs. Says the smoker was 'all right' last night.	29 May 1945

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3:28	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Glad she has finally heard from his mother, he will soon write to hers about retroactively getting permission for the engagement, mentions the engagement ring.	30 May 1945
3:29	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions receiving a NAAFI issue of soap and champagne, entertainment.	31 May 1945
3:30	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Comments on Wilma being moved to Basingstoke, England. Thanks her for photographs, mentions friend's returning from leave, playing a volleyball game.	1 June 1945
3:31	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Says the postal orderly has gone on leave so there will be no mail. Mentions having a half day off, embarking from Southampton for Normandy a year ago today, bothered by hay fever, preparing for school.	2 June 1945
3:32	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Discusses decision to get his mother to purchase an engagement ring, letter from a friend who learned her brother had been shot a year ago at Vught Concentration Camp, classes starting tomorrow.	3 June 1945
3:33	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Discusses receiving a letter from her mother and sister, school starting and teaching two classes, taking bookkeeping himself. Wishes her a happy one-month anniversary.	4 June 1945
3:34	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions drinking with friends Underwood, Bus, and Leitch, says they are urging them to get their marriage application in.	6 June 1945
3:35	Bus	ALS to Wilma Perry. Intoxicated letter, says he has set her wedding date in Vancouver, wishes her a 'lousy life' if he is not there for the wedding.	6 June 1945

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3:36	Ed	ALS to Wilma Perry. Intoxicated letter, says she should get married as soon as possible, hopes she can visit soon.	6 June 1945
3:37	Jackson	ALS to Wilma Perry. Intoxicated letter, hopes that Bill & Willie will come stay with him and his wife on their next leave, urges them to get married soon.	6 June 1945
3:38	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Hopes the letters from last night were not too shocking, mentions having had a sore throat for a few days.	7 June 1945
3:39	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Says he will have to go to the doctor tomorrow, as he has a 'violent chill.'	8 June 1945
3:40	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions he has been taken to the 6 C.C.S. in Almelo, believed he has a slight case of tonsillitis and will be there for a few days.	9 June 1945
3:41	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Complains about army mail, slight improvement in health, discusses hospital life.	10 June 1945
3:42	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Discusses feeling a bit better, Bus thinks it's 'crazy' to go back to the unit as they are a low priority to go home, wants to return as he is currently high on the leave roster.	11 June 1945
3:43	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions Bus coming to visit and bringing her letters, health has improved to where he can eat but his neck is twice its usual size. Bus says the unit cannot expect to be in Canada before June 1946, but rumors abound.	12 June 1945
3:44	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions temperature being normal again, no visitors today, the weather.	13 June 1945

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3:45	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Says he may be allowed out of bed tomorrow, can possibly go back to unit on Sunday, neck is still swollen.	14 June 1945
3:46	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Received visitors and multiple letters from her today, unsure when next leave, hoping they can coordinate. Discusses engagement ring, debates getting married soon in England or waiting for Canada.	15 June 1945
3:47	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions writing letters, feeling better, the weather. Expects to go back to the unit tomorrow.	16 June 1945
3:48	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Discusses the weather, doctor says he should stay for a few more days, a friend in the hospital ward.	17 June 1945
3:49	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions leave vacancy is June 22 nd , will have to give it up as the two-day trip would make a 'complete wreck' out of him right now. Discusses army is now choosing engineers at random for the occupation force due to lack of volunteers, potentially needs to get married quickly as it would strengthen his position. Suspense is difficult.	18 June 1945
3:50	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions he has passed up leave in favor of the next one, neck is still swollen. Discusses the weather, taking a walk, no more rumors about the occupation force, hay fever.	19 June 1945
3:51	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Discusses heat wave, going to the recreation hall, learned he had to go back to road work upon return to the unit, no more rumors about the occupation force.	20 June 1945

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3:52	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Says he is 'definitely scheduled' to go back to the unit tomorrow. Discusses the weather, not looking forward to road work, the election results.	21 June 1945
3:53	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions he is back to the unit, the arrival of photographs from Brussels, going to the cinema.	22 June 1945
3:54	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Says he will be in England to see her on Sunday. Mentions going out and drinking with Bus.	23 June 1945
3:55	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Thanks her for the photograph, mentions seeing her in Basingstoke on the upcoming Sunday. Discusses neck is swelling up again, potentially hives, and a formation regatta tomorrow.	24 June 1945
3:56	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions his mother will be sending the ring in a few days, writes plans for upcoming eleven-day leave. Says Bus and Ed have been put on Repat draft, and Al has been drafted in the occupation army, rumors abound, making it 'the war of nerves all over again.'	25 June 1945
3:57	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Says he is back at 6 C.C.S., expecting to move to No. 1 hospital, neck is swollen 'something terrible.'	27 June 1945
3:58	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Arrived at No. 1 hospital by ambulance last night, doctor says he will be leaving for base tomorrow- Bruges or Ghent, is going to try to get to England. Mentions seeing some old friends.	28 June 1945
3:59	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Has arrived at No. 12 in Bruges by hospital train. Mentions inquiring about getting to England, seeing an old friend who has volunteered for the occupation army.	29 June 1945

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3:60	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions 'feeling blue', as he was supposed to see her today. Discusses how the hospital is dull, making a game with another patient on the ward judging the nurses' needle giving abilities to pass time, writes Wilma a list of questions to answer.	1 July 1945
3:61	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Hoping mail will catch up with him soon. Discusses doctors saying his case is 'very unusual.' Describes activities and unideal writing conditions.	2 July 1945
3:62	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions the weather, neck is subsiding is bit but still has 'four sizes' to go. Remarks nurses change a lot, hoping mail will show up tomorrow.	3 July 1945
3:63	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions reading a lot, being stuck in bed, neck is less swollen, and pain is gone, wishes he was leaving for England, hopes he will get some sick leave.	4 July 1945
3:64	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Discusses discovering two old friends among the hospital staff.	5 July 1945
3:65	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Describes receiving two letters today from her, believes she was unaware he was not coming on leave as planned, apologizes. No longer feels they will evacuate him to England.	6 July 1945
3:66	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions receiving eight letters from her today, discusses engagement ring, her trips up to London, news from his mother and friends. Says his neck is slowly improving, situation complicated by hay fever.	7 July 1945

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3:67	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Mentions being taken off penicillin and sulfadiazine, discusses mutual friends, the weather.	8 July 1945
3:68	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Discusses how the ring is too tight and presents options to get it enlarged, mentions being bedridden, the weather.	9 July 1945
3:69	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Lost letter has arrived [about Bill not being able to make leave]. Discusses getting permission to go outside, neck is still swollen.	10 July 1945
3:70	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Discusses the weather, reading material, a friend who has been injured. Mentions his future is uncertain, believes he will be in hospital & convalescent depot for the next three weeks.	11 July 1945
3:71	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Describes the weather, seeing an Army show, being let down by the Postal Corps.	12 July 1945
3:72	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Discusses being 'much disturbed' by the mention of drafts, has told the medical officer again he wants to go to England quickly-may go next week. Has sent a message back to the unit to pack his important things.	14 July 1945
3:73	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Describes the weather, responds to news from her letters, mentions receiving a letter from Bus that the unit is now in Hengelo [Holland]. Says his name is now on the evacuation list for England, but his neck is improving.	15 July 1945
3:74	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Expresses excitement she is transferring to the Roman Way Convalescent Hospital, as he is bound to end up there after a few days in	17 July 1945

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		the General Hospital. Unsure when he will be able to get sick leave. Describes daily activities, hopes they will be together in ten days.	
3:75	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Responds to Wilma's letters, mentions rumor that they will not be leaving soon, discusses the weather, reading material.	18 July 1945
3:76	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Says his ward has filled up, should be leaving at the beginning of the week. Mentions Colonel thinks he needs three weeks at the convalescent hospital, discusses the weather and reading material.	19 July 1945
3:77	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. No word yet on when he will be leaving for England.	20 July 1945
3:78	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Perry. Expresses he will be leaving for England tomorrow, should be at Roman Way on Tuesday.	22 July 1945
3:79	Wilma Brown	AN to Mrs. M.M. Perry, Wilma's mother. Card announcing Wilma and Bill's marriage, proof that "we got the knot tied!"	25 August 1945
3:80		Two photographs of Bill and Wilma's wedding.	25 August 1945
3:81	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Brown. Asks how she is feeling about her operation tomorrow. Mentions arriving in Hertfordshire, describes the mess and schedule.	19 November 1945
3:82	Bill Brown	ALS to Wilma Brown. Hopes her tonsils came out okay, describes the mess and meals, started taking down huts and making a scaffold. Hopes Bill Parsons will be up soon, so he can find out the outcome of a meeting on the officer repat situation.	20 November 1945

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[William and Wilma Brown World War II letters and photographs]

Letter transcriptions

BOX: FOLDER	3:1
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THE ZOMBIE

Answer to a Question

You who have never heard the sound of shells,
Have never trembled from a mortar bursting close,
Have never seen your friends lie mangled, dead,
Nor fought beside them when they went to meet their God.
You know not what it means to live in winter
Crouched in a burrow scraped from oozing mud.
Nor yet, to stand and say farewell
To a friend who faced death with a smile.

The flares at night, the diving planes
The awful tearing sound that chills the spine,
You know them not, nor have you seen
Men rise to heights which you will never gain.
You, who have never sailed in a fighting ship
And manned her guns in heat and freezing cold,
Or flown through hell while friends on either side
Plummet to earth a blazing ball of fire.

You ask what we think of men like you?
Who stand apart, content to serve at home,
Cov'ring your shrinking souls with Hero's garb,
While girls in England died beside their guns.

Have you forgotten Singapore where British girls
Chose to stay and tend the wounded men?
Where are they now, and where, we ask,
Are your brothers, cousins, friends who heard the call.

What do we think? The answer's plain.
We who have known these things, which you do not,
Pity you, each one of you afraid
To take your rightful place with fighting men.
You'll never know the pride men feel
Who come through hell and live to tell the tale.
That brotherhood, sharing every joy and pain
Founded on common danger and pride of work well done.

We see the crosses stand stark and think
Of friends who lie beneath the winter sky,
We ask, how can our home breed such as you,
And call you men while heroes gladly die,
The men who fight don't want your kind.
We'll finish this with what we have.
Five years of war, and yet you waiver still.
Be not afraid, stay home, we'll carry on---alone!

Lt. W.E.K. Brown

First Canadian Army

Fifth Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers

~1944

No.1 C.G.R.U.

Cdn. Army. England

Nov. 23rd 1943

Dear Willie:

After tomorrow the address I gave you on board ship will apply, for which we are all thankful. I hope you have arrived at your destination safely. I can imagine that the City of London must be in a somewhat disorganized state after being visited by the two of you.

We thought for a while today that there was a possibility of getting a couple of days leave, but such hopes were dashed to the ground in short order. However I haven't given up hope yet that we may get some leave after tomorrow. Even if we don't, there might be a possibility of getting over your way on the week-end. Are they giving you any leave, or are you up to your neck in heating lamps and meat cleavers?

My baggage turned up yesterday. I unpacked my sleeping bag and the second night I spent in England was considerably warmer than the first. We have a great big fireplace about three inches square in our room. However we have nothing to burn in it except cigarette butts and they don't throw out much heat.

Yesterday afternoon we started out to find some friends in this area. We got all tangled up in buses and whatnot, and after riding five miles in the wrong direction, returned home and gave it all up as a bad job.

We went downtown to a show tonight and groped our way home in the blackout, which isn't nearly as black as I expected to see. We went into the damn theatre expecting to see Ann Sheridan, but instead we got Wallace Beery, which was a bit of a come-down to say the least.

I actually went up twenty-one points in the old bridge game this afternoon. However, it isn't nearly as much fun playing without my favourite kibitzer around to sympathize with my mis-bids – I missed bidding two grand slams.

We were paid in cash yesterday, which was good. But they have a quaint old English custom of paying you entirely in one pound notes, and we all had to go down town and buy new

wallets, which was bad. I bought myself a darn good wallet just before I left Canada and it's about an eighth of an inch too small to take English notes – which is also bad. I hope you got your little matter with the Paymaster straightened out. You will probably have so much you will have to open two bank accounts, as I understand they are very snooty about taking your money over here.

That's all for now, Willie. I hope that by tomorrow I will know more about the leave situation. It would be won-der-ful if we could get together on it.

Love, Bill

BOX: FOLDER	3:3
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6th June, 1944

Reinforcement Increment "A"

Hq 3 Cdn. Inf. Div.

Cdn. Army Overseas

Dear Mum,

No letter since I last wrote but mail is pretty slow these days and I expect that it will come all in a [b]unch some day soon.

I can just see you all at home today poring over newspapers and listening to radio newscasts every few minutes. How the world will thrill to the news that the invasion of Europe has started! By the time you get this the news will be several weeks old and the battle will have progressed considerably. If I live for another hundred years I shall never see a sight more thrilling than what I saw early this morning from the deck of our ship. There are ships for miles, as far as the eye could see, and the air was heavy with the rumbling of naval guns as they proceeded the coastal defenses. British and American planes were probably out by the thousands although relatively few flew over us.

According to reports that have been received from shore the landing was quite successful.

I hope you are not worrying about me. I am very confident of our success and I would not miss seeing this for anything. Everybody, both Army and Navy, is in high spirits. The troops who left our ship early this morning to do the assaulting were quietly confident that they would do a good job, and according to what reports we have, they did.

Once again, please do not worry about me. I shall write as often as I can although at times it may be difficult.

No more news at present.

All best love,

Billy.

BOX: FOLDER	3:4
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December 25, 1944

Belgium

Postcard: Season's Greetings, 5th Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers

I am still looking for your signs along the highways. Why don't you move up into the war zones and give the fighting men a chance.

Love,

Bill.

24th March 1945

Dear Willie,

Many thanks for your Easter card. It not only beat Easter by a wide margin, but only missed St. Patrick's day by one day. I was very surprised to hear where you were. I thought I had you spotted way back last November, and I went down to Ghent on leave to look you up. I found the hospital all right, but was very disappointed to find you had left for England two months before. It's nice to get around and see the world, but maybe you will catch up with me yet.

It has been a long winter here but Spring has finally arrived in full force. The last three or four days have been just like May at home, much to our delight. One of our officers got a little over-enthusiastic and took off his winter undies too soon, thereby catching a cold and spreading it amongst the rest of us in short order.

I went back to England early in January for nine days leave. Had filthy weather all the time I was there, so I didn't do much outside work, except in going from bar to bar. Found time to take in a few shows and concerts. Spent my whole leave in London. It was a good leave, except that the trip there and back was little short of a nightmare. Sixteen hours on an Army train going and coming.

I saw Rusty about two months ago. He is a big shot in the Chief Engineer's office now & is a busy man. I spent New Year's Eve with a lot of old pals including Bill Folley. I haven't seen him since. I don't know whether he ever recovered from that night or not. I run into Morg every now and then and he hasn't changed a bit. I have never seen John Combes, but I hear from him every now and then. Nobody seems to know where poor old Todd is. The last I heard of him he was still in the C.E.R.V.

That seems to be about all for now. If you happen to be heading my way, for heaven's sake drop me a line.

As ever,

Bill

Lieut WEK Brown
s Cdn Fd Coy RCE
Cdn Army Overseas
4th May 1945

Hi ya Honey:

This is a hell of an hour to be writing to the gal you are engaged to, but I'll do my best in spite of it. I just finished writing three Air Mail forms to my mother describing my adventures in the past few days --- especially the last day. My pen ran out of ink twice, but I think I said everything there was to say. I didn't need to tell her anything about you yourself --- she's heard it all before.

I didn't get back here until about eight o'clock tonight. The wretched truck didn't show up until three, and I damn near froze to death waiting for it. I found the company had moved today. Our new quarters are quite luxurious. There is a lovely Steinway Grand in the dining room but I haven't had a chance to give it a work out yet.

I had a very hard time convincing the boys I wasn't kidding when I told them we are engaged. None of them believed you could be so dumb. But I finally persuaded them that I caught you in a weak moment, and they all sent their best wishes to you & showered their congratulations on me. Bus & Fergy are going down on Sunday so you will probably see them. Bus is going to England and Fergy to Canada --- the lucky so and so.

I have been wearing glasses now for fourteen years, but last night was the first time I have ever taken them off and left them anywhere. You see what you do to me! Don't worry about them, though, honey, because I have three more pairs. However, the major doesn't know that and I will try to persuade him that I have to make a trip down to collect them. I guess my cub (?) belt is there too. It has been tough trying to write tonight with everybody talking and interrupting, and radio news flashes about surrenders in Germany and Denmark and Holland. All the good news is coming at once --- first you & me and then the war.

There were three letters from my mother waiting for me here. She said in one that Bill Moore's wife had received notification that he had been wounded, but that he was remaining on duty. She was very worried and wanted to know if I knew anything about it. I didn't, but told her that if he was remaining on duty it couldn't be more than a scratch.

I gave my mother your address so I shouldn't be surprised if you hear from her in a few weeks.

I must away to bed now and get some sleep. I've been thinking of you all day, darling, and I'll be down to see you soon if I have to crawl on my hands & knees.

Good night, darling.

Best love,

Bill

5th May 1945.

Dear Willie:

We are just sitting down to a bottle of Scotch (the OC's) to say a fitting farewell to Fergy who is departing tomorrow. He and Bus are going together. So I figured I had better write you before I dipped into the stuff, as there is no telling what I might say after.

I am going to give this letter to Bus, so you will probably get it before you get the one I wrote last night. The boys have just finished drinking to you & me, so, naturally I had to have a quick one too.

Say! We've been engaged now for forty-five hours, and I haven't received one letter from you yet. What the hell's the idea? Do you still love me, OR NOT?

R.S.V.P.

I am hoping to swing a trip down to Nijmegen (Holland) sometime early next week. I am working on it. If I do get down, I might come around and see you, if I haven't anything better to do. Would you be interested?

Our colonel has decided that tomorrow is V-Day, in spite of what General Eisenhower says. So we are having a formation Church Parade & the padre is in a hell of a stew as to whether or not he should use the official V-Day service or not. (Canadian Victory in Europe - VE Day was 8th May, 1945, 3 days after.)

I tried out the Steinway Grand today and it's not bad at all. Much better than anything else I have run into around here.

Have you figured out yet how you are going to support me in the manner to which I am accustomed? We are talking gratuities and stuff and I find mine won't last me very long. So you had better start looking around for a high-paid job.

It's practically impossible to write in this bedlam, as I had better stop. This is a pretty disjointed letter.

Good-night, darling. I still love you and hope you are the same.

Bill

Separate note in same envelope:

In spite of anything Bus may say, honey, these (candies) are from me – avec much love.

Bill

6th May 1945

Dear Willie:

Hi honey! How's everything? This one-sided correspondence is getting me down. I am rapidly running out of things to say. I hope Bus delivered my letter & the box of candies tonight. And I hope I will get a letter from you tomorrow.

As things stand at the moment, my platoon is to have a day off on Wednesday, and the O.C. said that if nothing should come up, I could go down to Nijmegen at noon and come back the next morning. It sounds like a fair idea to me. How does it sound to you?

Isn't the news dull today? Only two more German armies have surrendered. It looks like the war will be over before I see you again.

I devoted most of this evening to trying to struggle through Liszt's 2nd Hungarian Rhapsody. Quite a painful struggle too. Then Dixon came along with a bunch of music I can't play and we put in a short, grim, session.

The past two days have been the dulllest I can remember putting in for some time. We are doing some road work which is really tiresome. There is absolutely nothing to do, the time just drags, and then you are worn out by the time the day is over.

Well, honey, that's all for now. I think I'll take another crack at the 2nd Hun. Rap. Before I go to bed.

Best love, darling,

Bill

7th May 1945

Dear Willie:

Hi honey! How are you on the eve of VE Day? In a better mood than I am, I hope. We are not very happy tonight for two reasons. First, our respected officer commanding decided to put 6 volts through our 2 volt radio today, and as a result we have no radio with which to keep in touch with world events. And secondly, the powers that be have decided that peace or no peace, we carry on with our road work tomorrow. I can think of no deadlier way to celebrate. If that isn't enough to make a chap depressed, what is?

The only bright spot on today's was a message from Bus that you would be free on Wednesday afternoon. As far as I can see now, I'll be there – probably before this letter is.

I have heard from my mother today, but not from you. I have come to the conclusion that you were probably so drunk on Thursday night that you had forgotten all about promising to marry me when you woke up on Friday morning. So I guess I'll have to propose all over again when I see you on Wednesday. I hope your response will be as good as the next time as it was the last!!! How about it, honey?

We got in some more Naafi (**Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes**) champagne tonight – one bottle per each. So we shall have something to drink on VE Day – but not much.

The damn war has been going on for so long now that now that it's over, I just can't realize it. It doesn't mean a thing to me. Stepping on the next boat headed for Canada really will mean something to me. That will be the day. What do you say we go back on the old Bayano (the banana boat they took to Europe on & met on), just for old time's sake.

Well, honey, I guess that's all for tonight. I wish you were here right now. You could drive away those blues in nothing flat.

Good-night, darling.

Best love,

Bill

8th May 1945

Dear Willie:

Well, honey, the postman passed me by again today, so I guess it's all off. I did get a note you sent back via Bus' driver, though, and that was better than nothing. But, darling, you shouldn't write such passionate notes. Why, the paper was all scorched and it was only with great difficulty that I was able to read it.

I don't quite know why I am writing tonight when I am going to see you tomorrow. However, I said I would write every day, however meagre, and here it is.

The High Command broke down and gave us a half holiday today and a full one tomorrow, which cheered everybody up no end. I listened to Churchill's speech this afternoon and I was rather disappointed in it, weren't you? It wasn't anywhere near his usual standards. You will be glad to hear I also had a haircut and a bath, so I am all spruced up for tomorrow.

This is just a quickie, as I shall see you tomorrow and tell you in a few short and well-chosen words just what I think of you.

Best love, darling

Bill

10th May 1945

Darling:

The old Army sure pulled a dirty one on us, didn't it. Everything was just timed wrong – except, of course, - last Thursday night (or Friday morning), and it was timed just right.

Well, honey, I rolled up to the little house about one o'clock yesterday expecting to hold you in my arms within the next five seconds, and when I saw the note on the door and the basket of stuff on the piano, I figured that something like that had happened. All the other kids were out to lunch, as I sat down and read your letter, and it's a good thing that no one was around to hear me swear. I really outdid myself. So after I had paced up and down a bit and chewed my beret to pieces, I drove up to the mess to see what I could find out. I saw Phyl, and Flora, and Miss Pepper, and they were all very sympathetic, and told me all about what had happened. It was very nice of Miss Pepper to try to get me by phone, but that was hopeless right from the start. Well, honey, to say I was disappointed would be very much of a gross understatement. As you say, though, it could have been worse. It might have happened the previous week.

I was more or less stuck there for the day, as I had taken my batman down with me, and Al Dixon, and I had arranged to pick them up at midnight. I didn't want to spoil their day by going home then, and it was useless to try to start out for Brussels at that hour, so Phyl undertook to entertain me for the day, which was certainly good of her, as I wasn't very good company, because my mind was on the "little girl who wasn't there." She gave me your letter of the night before and when I'd read that, I was even worse company than before. Anyway, we had lunch, and went back down to the house, where she dug out some snapshots of you with various other people hanging around, and told me I could have them & cut them up to exclude everyone but you which was better than nothing. We drove down town and picked up some snaps of yours. There were two bunches – one the enlargements of Marg Clark's wedding, which I am enclosing, and the other the roll you put in your camera the day we went to see the bridge, which Phyl kept as she wanted to get some reprints. The one at the bridge didn't turn out very well – everybody had their eyes closed, or something. The group you took at the mess was much better.

After that we went up to the Ensa Cinema to see Anne Sheridan in “Shine on Harvest Moon”. The picture had already started when we got in and, as it was a very bright day, we were blind as bats when we got inside. It took us about five minutes to find seats, during which time we were staggering around, stepping on people’s toes & sitting on their laps, and generally disrupting the whole thing. Phyl nearly fell down a flight of steps and broke her neck. But we finally got settled, and the picture was very good, although I had seen it the week before in Brussels.

After, we went over to what used to be the Stork Club. It’s open again now as a civilian café. All they had to drink there was tomato juice, so after one of those, we went back to the place across from your mess to try to get some beer. But all they had there was some ghastly red lemonade. The chap said that all the beer had been sent to Amsterdam. So we downed a glass of that. Then we went over to supper, where Dotty & Flora joined us. Dotty was leaving for Brussels today by HUP and she persuaded Phyl to go with her and send her luggage by train, so they spent the evening packing. I hung around until about nine-thirty, helping them move trunks & stuff. They rang out a bottle of champagne and we drank to you, darling. Then the three of them each gave me a hearty kiss and sent me on my way. It was very good of them to try to keep me amused, but it was an empty day without you, darling. It could have been so wonderful.

I went down to Al Dixon’s friends, next door to where we used to live, and we stayed there until about eleven-thirty when we left to pick up the batman. We got home about a quarter past three and there was a letter waiting from you, written on the fourth. Three letters from you all in one day – no wonder I had trouble getting to sleep even at a quarter to four in the morning. And especially when I didn’t write you at all yesterday.

Miss Pepper gave me a CMHQ address to send your letters to so I hope you get them reasonably quickly. Darling, don’t let them get any ideas about sending you back to Canada. Not that I see any prospect of getting to England, at all, but it is a much better chance than Canada. I hope you will be posted to a unit in England and that you can stay there until I get there.

Old Ed went to work on me this morning and got me all wakened up at 7.30. Only then did he remember that my platoon was not working today. However, he had me wide awake by then, so I got up for breakfast and then went back to bed until lunch time. It is a beautiful

afternoon, and the grounds of our palatial mansion are looking lovely, and, sweetheart I wish you were here.

We have gone back on a peace-time week with Saturday afternoons and Sundays off – and you are in England *?&<!!!

We had our VE Day celebration on Tuesday night. We had eight bottles of champagne, which didn't go very far as we invited all the sergeants in. But with the added help of some German goof and one bottle of Scotch, we got happy enough to have a pretty peppy party.

Well, honey, this is a pretty long letter for me. Maybe you will forgive me not writing yesterday.

Don't forget to have that photograph taken "le plus tôt possible" and don't forget to send me one for my mother too.

They say "absence makes the heart grow fonder" but mine couldn't grow any fonder anyway.

All my love, darling,

Bill

14th May 1945

Dear Willie:

Hi honey! How's everything tonight? I hope you had a good trip today and arrived safely in England. Nice day for travelling – not too hot here, anyway. Quite pleasant, for a change.

No letter from you today, but I really wasn't expecting one. I might get one from Brussels, but after that I expect it will be some time before your mail starts to come through.

I had a fairly busy day today, for a change. The O.C. decided that maybe it would be a good idea if someone poked their nose inside the orderly(?) room to see what was happening. I did, and found paper piled up a foot high on the 2i/c's desk. I waded through most of it this afternoon and tonight I had to go to a meeting to discuss arrangements for a formation officer's dance which is being cooked up for next Saturday night in Oldenzaal – you remember the town we toured the other night looking for excitement. I wish you could be here for it, but I guess I will have to content myself with a poor Dutch substitute.

I had a letter from my mother today, written the 5th. She was still in bed with a cold, but was considerably cheered by the news of the surrender in Holland and Northern Germany. She was trying, by remote control, to lay in a supply of food in case VE Day was declared over the week-end. She hadn't had any more mail from me, even the letter saying I was off to Brussels.

The padre, who is our No 1 rumor-monger, attended his weekly gossip-meeting today, and came back with a honey. He always comes back with something, and often as not, he turns out to be dead right. Today's little bit was that we would all be home within three months. I'm sorry to say that none of us believe it – it sounds too fantastic. But it's nice to hear pleasant rumors for a change.

Well, honey, I guess that's about all for tonight. Strange to say, I still love you tonight, just a little bit more than I did last night, and I guess I miss you a bit, too.

'Night, darling,

Bill

15th May 1945

Hi Honey:

How's everything? I hope you are somewhere near being settled somewhere in England, and that it is a hospital where you wanted to go. No mail from you yet, but it is much too early to expect that.

I had a letter from my mother today written on VE Day. Very excited. The only trouble was she had been in bed for several days with a bad cold. She had gone up to my Aunt's and had gone to bed there, where, she reported, she was being looked after very well.

All of which reminds me – I forgot to write down the name of that friend of yours in Toronto who, you suggested, might go around and see my mother. You know – the one you said had taken all your boy friends away from you. Thank heaven she did!!! I also forgot to give you my mother's address to give to your friend. It is –

MRS. EBERTS BROWN

324 SPADINA RD

TORONTO 10

Phone (I think) – Randolph 8490

I am not at all sure about the phone number. If you will send me the name of the gal, I will tell my mother to expect a visit from her. It will have to be within the next few weeks, though, because she is leaving for Montreal sometime next month for the summer.

The big questionnaire came in today – all about what you wanted to do with what little future the army has left you.

I hope you marked it the same way I did, showing a big preference for immediate demobilization, and a big razzberry for everything else.

There is a big Ensa (Entertainments National Service Association) show on here tonight – six beautiful girls sing(?) and about twenty men. It's supposed to be an all-Canadian cast. We are leaving in a few minutes, so I shall have to cut my epistle short for tonight.

Possibly I shall write you again sometime, and if I ever get to England, we must see if we can't arrange to get together!!!!

Goodnight, darling. All my love.

Bill

16th May 45

Dear Willie:s

Believe it or not, I got a letter from you today written two days before you appeared on the scene in Nordhorn (Germany). The good old Army mails! It's nice to get caught up with all the news, and I am glad to hear you love me in Brussels as much as in Nijmegen (Holland).

The Ensa show we saw last night turned out to be one of the Canadian Army Show units called "Combined Ops". It wasn't as good as most of their shows have been, but we enjoyed it just the same. There were about six girls, CWACs, in it – none of them particularly good looking. The highlight of the show was the magician who was really a whiz. He had quite a line of patter which went over as big as his tricks. Tonight I went down to the local cinema to see "Five Graves to Cairo". I had seen it before a year or so back, but you can't be too fussy about the entertainment you get in Nordhorn. Besides, it is a pretty fair picture. Did you ever see it?

I am expecting a letter daily from my mother saying she has received the letters I wrote on the 4th. Do you recall any unusual incident that took place on the 4th? I suppose you would have heard from your mother already if you were anywhere where your mail could catch up to you. But, knowing the Army, it will probably be weeks before you get all the mail that is chasing around after you.

Today we filled out the new questionnaires that decide what your preference to your future fate will be. I put a great big X in the spot where it said "NO" for service in the Far East, and a big "ONE" where it said – "Indicate your preference for immediate demobilization." I hope you did the same. Somehow I can't see myself sitting at home and knitting socks to send you in Burma.

Clive is expected back tomorrow and I hope he will be able to give me a full report on your conduct in Brussels.

One of those giant Nordhorn June bugs just flew in and disrupted everything. Old Ed and I chased him all over the room and I finally winged him with a newspaper, and Ed crushed him on the floor.

My batman left me a couple of days ago to go to hospital and I haven't got another one yet. How would you like the job? I think we could work your transfer all right.

Well, honey, I guess that's about all for tonight. I wish the Army Mails would smarten up a bit so I would get some letters from you. You are probably wishing the same.

All my love, darling,

Bill

17th May 45

Darling:

I almost wrote to you tonight from the middle of a drunken orgy. Old Ed and another officer from another company came in stewed to the gills and were raising hell here a while ago. But they've gone now and all is quiet – except for the O.C.'s record player.

Clive came back tonight, and I was disappointed to find he had practically nothing to report on your movements. He said he saw you once on the way to Brussels, but he hadn't seen you at all once he got there. So now I don't know who you were out with in Brussels or what you did or anything. I shall have to wait until the Army finally decides to disgorge some of the letters they have from you to me.

Unit censorship of mail has been discontinued here as from today. Think of what that means to us. Now I won't have to read the letters I write to you. Consequently, you can expect the temperature of the letters to rise about a hundred degrees.

This has been a particularly dull day, so this will probably be a particularly dull letter. With no letter from you it was bound to be a dull day. I did have a letter today from my friend Clare Boase – the nurse in Worthing I was telling you about – and she was very thrilled to hear I was engaged. She sent her best wishes for our future happiness, and said to tell you if you were anywhere near Worthing, she would be only too glad to have you come down and stay with her on a leave or week-end. You must meet her before you go back to Canada. I know you would like her.

I have been kicking myself all week that I didn't think to ask Clive to call around for my photographs while he was in Brussels. They should have been ready today. Now I shall have to wait two or three weeks while they come by mail. And talking of photographs, honey, I hope you are taking immediate action in getting one taken. After all, I am liable to forget what you look like if you don't send me one soon!!! (- I don't think!)

Well honey, I guess that's about all for tonight. Isn't it ridiculous – you and I both writing letters like mad every night and neither one of us getting a damn one.

Goodnight, darling.

All my love,

Bill.

18th May 1945

Dear Willie:

So! It's like that, is it? The O.C. gets a letter from you so personal he wouldn't even read it to us. When I suggested you write him a bread-and-butter letter I didn't mean you to give it top priority. Imagine my embarrassment when I have to ask my own O.C. whether my fiancé has arrived safely in England, and what unit she is with. And me without so much as a postcard since you left. As we say in military circles, "an explanation of the a/m unorthodox procedure is required at the H.Q. immediately repeat immediately."

It seems that I remember you mentioning that you would like to go to No 13. Am I right? Anyway, darling, I am glad to know you arrived safely in merrie England, and to know that you are in such a pleasant part of the country. Also, it is handy to Engineer officers coming from the Continent on leave.

Well, life carries on in Nordhorn much the same as ever, believe it or not. Old Ed, much to his disgust, left today for Ostende to attend a course on mines. He and I had to toss to see who went, and he lost, much to his disgust and my delight. Imagine going on a mines course at this stage of the game.

We went down to the local cinema tonight to see "The White Cliffs of Dover" which, I had been told, is very good. However, when we got there we found that the schedule had been changed and some fourth rate picture was playing instead. There were no seats left in the theatre anyway, so maybe it's just as well it had been changed.

We are going full steam ahead for our party tomorrow night in Oldenzaal. We started this morning to manufacture ice cubes and store them away in a thermos container. It will probably be a drunken brawl. Most Canadian officers' parties are.

Well, if you find time between writing to majors and brigadiers, drop me a line sometime!!! You have one more chance to redeem yourself. If I don't get a letter tomorrow, I am going home to mother.

Goodnight, darling. Bill.

19th May 1945

Dear Miss Perry:

Chilly, isn't it? I don't know what the weather is like in England, but it will probably grow several degrees colder when this letter gets there. And quite rightly so, too. I didn't grow too wrathful when the major received a letter yesterday and I didn't, but when the mail came in today and the only letter for me was from the Progressive Conservative candidate in St. Patrick Riding assuring me he would look after my best interests if elected – then that was too much. And don't think I'm not hearing about it either, because I haven't heard anything else all day.

I'm off in a few minutes to our dance in Oldenzaal. And I have definitely decided to look the field over to find a new fiancée. (You needn't bother to send my ring back – I can get another one for fifty cents by writing to the University of Toronto.)

So much for that. I hope I have made myself clear on the point.

Life crawls on apace in Nordhorn. I am now O.C. road – on account of because everybody else has gone away on leave or on course. A most exciting job, as you may well imagine.

I approach the aforementioned party with some apprehension. It seems as if half of Army H.Q. and other HQ's is going to be there, which is enough to kill any party. I was down in the hall this afternoon. There is a big poster up on the wall showing a soldier and a Dutch lassie with their faces about half a millimetre apart. Underneath is the caption – "Don't be bashful – they love it!" I'll let you know whether they do or not – if I can get any of the fellows to tell me.

Well, honey, sweetheart, angel face, if I don't get at least three letters from you in the next mail, I am going to slip myself into an envelope, and pop out of your mail box and wring that little neck of yours. So take warning.

All expressions of endearment are withheld tonight for disciplinary reasons.

Yours,

Bill.

20th May 1945

Dear Willie:

Hi honey! What the hell? The postman still hasn't delivered any mail from you. Really! I mean to say, Really! People are beginning to talk, you know, (and I'm not kidding – in fact they won't shut up.) This mail is all screwy. The letter I mentioned a couple of days ago from my friend in Worthing came in two days. Today I got a letter from my mother written last Sunday. Unfortunately, the letter she wrote before that (containing her comments on receiving my letters of the 4th) has not turned up yet, which doesn't make sense at all, but that's the Army Post for you. So I still don't know what her comments are. Reading between the lines of this letter, though, I should say that they are quite favourable. She mentions that she had written to you – to No 1, of course, so it probably won't show up for a while. She asks if I am anywhere near Amsterdam, and suggests I might be able to buy a ring there. But she says if I want her to get it in Toronto she will be only too glad to do so. She is going to have a look as soon as she is up and around again – she was still in bed up at my Aunt's when she wrote. She had received the Mother's Day Flowers and the perfume from Brussels, so she was reasonably happy about that. I have just finished writing her, and I explained the various difficulties attached to the scheme of getting a ring in Amsterdam.

She asked if the 2 & ¼ ” measurement I took on your finger was around the knuckle. As she pointed out, quite reasonably, I thought, the ring has to go on over the knuckle – a point that escaped me when I was making the survey. As I recall, I took the measurement around the small of the finger. So the next time you are anywhere near your left hand, will you check up and see if the 2 & ¼ “ ring will go over the knuckle. Really, honey, you should have thought of that. Didn't any of those eighteen guys ever measure you for a ring before?

Well, the party last night was a great success, except for the girls, who were very typically Dutch. You took one look at them and then you made a mad dash for the bar and had about three quick ones before you took another look. I didn't see one that looked anywhere near suitable for a fiancée, so I decided to hang on to the one I have and give her just one more chance (Sunday excluded). There was plenty to drink at the party and the place we had it was a very nice

hotel – good dance floor & everything. However, there was something missing – it must have been you.

I didn't get up until fairly late this morning, and I didn't do much during the day except practice on the Steinway, and drive down to Oldenzaal to pick up some stuff we left down there last night.

Well, if only I got some mail from somewhere, I might have something to talk about.

Yes! I might love you just a tiny bit tonight – but very tiny. One point in your favour is that at least none of the other officers in this company heard from you today, which is something. You had better take steps to see that your stock goes up by tomorrow night, my girl, or else ___!!!

It is nearly tea-time, and I have a number of letters to write yet, so I had better sign off.

Goodnight, honey.

Love,

Bill.

21st May 1945

Dear Willie:

Well, honey, the sun is shining again and everything is hunky-dory because there were no less than four letters from you in the mail today of the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th. Presumably you also wrote one from Brussels on the 13th, but it hasn't shown up yet. It's great that you and Marg managed to get together again. Please thank her for the letter and tell her I'll keep any eye open for her husband's unit. And life in Cuckfield (Sussex, England) does sound very pleasant what with tennis matches and cokes and things.

Trust you to make friends with the Air Force pilots en route. Any time they want to transport you to Nijmegen for the week-end it will be quite O.K. by me. In fact, it will be terrific. We expect to move back into the Apeldoorn (Holland) area sometime, but we don't know exactly when. It would be much easier for you to get a ride over to here than for me to get one over to there – on account of because the pilots, for some strange reason, don't go weak at the knees when I smile at them.

Your matron-in-chief is certainly playing ball to the fullest extent. I am not very clear on what this teacher's course you mention is, but it doesn't sound quite the thing for a girl who has her future mapped out with eight bouncing babies. Glad to hear you birded the Burma proposition – Canada sounds much better.

The missing letter from my mother turned up today. She said she wasn't surprised when she got my letters announcing the big news. She had had letters from Bill Moore and John Combes and had been reading between the lines in my own letters, and was very happy about the whole thing. The only thing she isn't happy about is choosing the ring. She thinks a girl ought to be able to choose her own ring. However, she says she will be glad to do it if we decide we really want her to. So it's up to you, honey. If you would rather wait & choose it yourself, you may. But if you decide you want her to do it, she will be only too glad to do it. –Switches to pencil here- (Damn this pen of mine!) It doesn't matter to me one way or the other. I will leave it up to you entirely. In case she does get it, she wants a complete description because I am slightly biased. When I write home and say "get a ring for the most beautiful girl in the world," it sounds

good, but it isn't much help. The best thing is for you to hurry up with that photograph so you can send her one. And if you have one to spare, you might send me one too, to add to my collection!!!

It rained solidly all day today & was thoroughly miserable until the mail came in, and then it was a beautiful day. Which reminds me, I must try to get your raincoat done up tomorrow.

I hope some of my letters have caught up with you by now. It is now after midnight, so I must away to bed. I love you very very much tonight, in case you are interested.

Good night darling,

Bill.

22nd May 45

Darling:

The sun shined again today – even though it was raining – ‘cause another letter, dated the 18th, came in today. Honey, lay off the chocolates & concentrate on the tennis & the bicycle riding, so you will have a 1945 streamline figure when I get to England. And don’t bother leaving any loopholes, honey. I couldn’t crawl out of one no matter what you had on the other side.

Bus came back from leave today & we have been talking together, with a couple of interruptions since 5 o’clock (it is now 12.30). He had a good leave & he told me all about seeing you & seeing Jeanie on the way back. He & I together killed a bottle of scotch (his) and a bottle of champagne (yours) and we have talked over many things tonight on the strength of it – including how we have been at loggerheads the past couple of months. We are now good pals again, and he says he & his wife are going to attend our wedding even if they have to hitch-hike from Vancouver.

Honey, it is too late to write much more tonight, but I couldn’t go to bed without reminding you that I do love you very much and miss you terribly.

Good night, sweetheart,

Bill.

23rd May 1945.

Darling:

The postal and physio departments have certainly smartened up the past few days. I guess that little talking to I gave them last week had its effect. Two more letters from you today of the 19th and 20th, so in spit of the pouring rain, everything was bright & rosy for me. Honey, I can't figure out why a gal like you could sit down every night and write to a guy like me. Every time I think about it I get the urge to dash madly over to yonder England and "marry up wif yo' " quick before you change your mind. I may not be the smartest guy in the world, but I certainly am the luckiest.

I hope the letter I wrote last night wasn't too incoherent. I wasn't exactly what you would call cold sober when I wrote it. (Bus just interrupted to send you his love & tell you he's in better shape now than he was last night). Incidentally, so am I.

I heard from my mother again today – she is still up at my Aunt's, but she is up and around and feeling a bit better. She asked if I had written to your family to ask their permission to marry you. I guess I'll have to confess to her that I haven't. As a matter of fact, I thought of it when you were here and meant to talk it over with you, but other pressing matters drove it out of my head. I even forgot to get your mother's address. You had better send same post haste, and I will try to make amends for by breach of etiquette.

Incidentally, have you received your mother's comments on the whole business yet? I am more than a little anxious to know what she says.

Lucky man, Marg's husband, to be en route to Canada via England and a physio. I wouldn't mind being in his shoes at all. I am most interested in that great big hug you mention. But, honey, is there only one?

I guess getting engaged didn't make much impression on you – you don't even remember what day it was. In a letter dated the 18th you say, quote, "Happy Anniversary again – two weeks ago tonight!!! – Well, tomorrow a.m. I guess" unquote. For future reference, my sweet one, it

was the night of 3rd-4th, that the big event happened. It must have been some other guy who proposed the next night – I wasn't there.

Well, we are still struggling along working (?) on the same little piece of road. Starting tomorrow we are going to have every afternoon off for sports. A smoker is being cooked up for next week and I have to play some accompaniments for a couple of our budding crooners. One of them is our officer's mess cook. Did you hear him giving voice when you were here?

Our new 2i/c (viz: Second in command) arrived today. Chap called Horwood. Seems very nice but I have hardly seen him yet. The poor O.C. just found out this afternoon that in spite of his 217 points he can't go home, because all OC's and 2 i/c's have to stay and go home with their units. Tough luck, eh!

Honey, I wish you were here – I miss you terribly. There are so many things we have to talk about. I never have been any good at writing letters – I can do a much better job when I am on the scene. I expect my letters must seem awfully stupid to you.

At this point the above-mentioned cook has just been in and practised his songs for the smoker – “Stardust” and “Girl of My Dreams”, which he sings in a falsetto which is pretty grim. I don't know why he insists on singing falsetto – he sounds much nicer when he sings naturally.

Well, honey, I have been about two hours with all the various interruptions and it's nearly time to go to bed.

I think we'll have to call the engagement off long enough for me to get another couple of dozen letters written – I have a hell of a stack of them to answer. I don't know how you can rip off eight in one night. 'Twould kill me.

Good night, darling. I love you very very much.

Bill.

24th May 1945

Dear Mrs B. (to be):

Hi honey! How's my favourite specimen of the female species this evening?

I wish you had been here to see the Ensa show tonight. It was the best of its kind I have ever seen, consisting of a super dance band and four (gulp!) girls. The bass fiddle player was the screwiest looking joe I have ever seen, and he kept making faces while the band played, and everybody was rolling in the aisles.

Well the long lost letter from Brussels turned up today – only 9 days, not bad – as well as another gem of the 20th. I am getting so caught up with your letters now that I guess I can expect only one a day from now on. That will be rather hard to take, after the past few days, but I guess it will have to do. Thanks for the cartoons. At last reports that sappers face was still red.

How many ~~points~~ (I have them on my mind) pounds (avoirdupois) have you lost with all this tennis playing and bicycling. In spite of the streamlined figure stuff, you don't want to end up all skin and bones.

Today the whole unit had to attend a lecture on Rehabilitation and stuff given by the O.C. It is the first of a series of these, the last of which is to be given on Monday by yours truly. The O.C.'s lecture provoked a lively discussion in the mess tonight on the merits and de-merits of the Army of Occupation. Not that I'm considering it. It may be a good go for some people, but not for me. Look what I've got to go home to (or with)!

It looks as though they are going to turn the whole unit into a big school – courses in Arithmetic, English, French, Maths, Physics etc. starting all over the place. The only catch is that we have to give these courses. So in a couple of weeks time you can visualize me standing in front of an eager and expectant group of sappers trying to figure out how many fence posts are required in a 50X40 field. Life, for the next few months, is going to be somewhat grim. I suppose it's better than working on roads, though.

I finally got around to packaging up your raincoat this afternoon. I am afraid it is a pretty sloppy job. If there is one thing I hate doing more than anything else it is doing up parcels. I

always get to the stage where I could use at least five hands, but have to get along with a mere two. I have been putting it off, just dreading the ordeal, but I decided if I didn't hurry up you might catch pneumonia or something, which is definitely not good.

Time to fold up and go to bed again – my favourite hour of the day.

Goodnight, sweetheart. As we say in France, “je t'aime beaucoup.”

Bill.

25th May 1945

Dear Willie:

‘Lo, honey. How’s things and stuff? Cooking with gas, I hope.

Fortune and the postal corps smiled upon me today when they brought me another literary gem from No 13 dated the 22nd.

Glad to hear you had paid a visit to the dentist. I meant to talk to you about that. It is essential that your teeth, eyes, feet, appendix etc. are all in good shape before you stagger down the aisle with me. Reports from specialists in these various fields will be submitted in triplicate before any date can possibly be set. Where necessary, applicants will be in possession of two complete sets of false choppers in good working order. (Army Routine Order No 62518).

The accent here is on education. There were all sorts of great enrolments today and I wound up with two classes to teach – one in Algebra and one in Physics. I am also pledged to study calculus with the O.C. So when you next see me, my head will be so full of figures (mathematical variety) that my conversation will sound like a radio announcer reading a set of trig tables.

The most exciting event in my life on this 25th day of May – besides, of course, it being our third anniversary – was that I started to break in a new pair of boots. I bought them the other day in Hengelo (Holland) out of dire necessity. Normally I operate with two pairs. I sent one pair to the shoemaker’s for repairs in January and he likes them so much that he keeps them on his bench and fondles them tenderly every day. Whenever I question him on the subject he always says he hasn’t any leather. That’s his story. Personally, I think he’s wearing them.

Consequently I have been wearing the same pair of boots every day for four months, and it was getting to the point where the soles were so thin I had to wear my bedroom slippers inside the boots to avoid blisters. The QM couldn’t fit me, so I had to break down and buy a new pair.

Honey, when I get to the point where I have to write a 250-word essay on a new pair of boots, you may deduce that conversational material dealing with the dangerous and exciting life I lead is rather scarce. Life in Nordhorn (Germany), to understate it most grossly, is dull.

Incidentally, one of the subjects on the 5th's new curriculum, which is designed to give even the most ignorant and stupid a PhD in six months, is spelling. Applications for said course are not numerous, and I was wondering if you could possibly think of anyone who might derive benefit from such instruction. (!!!!)

Never before have I been guilty of such a large amount of such pure drivel in so few pages. I will close with a quotation from a poem someone read me once.

“I love you,

“I love you,

“I love you.”

(Anon)

Goodnight, darling. Sweet dreams.

Bill.

26th May 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello, angel! I am beginning to suspect that you have been carrying on passionate romances by mail for several years. I don't know how any girl, romancing via the post for the first time, could ever write such wonderful letters as you do. They make me ashamed of my own – especially when I rate about eight pages from you just after I have finished a meagre three to you. Another of these “passionate papers” landed in my mail box today, dated the 23rd. Darling, you are forgiven a thousand times over for the lapse last week. Please take that letter dealing with disciplinary measures and tear it into a thousand little pieces (one for each time you are forgiven.)

This business about your personal dimensions isn't very clear after the somewhat confused statement in your letter today. First you talk about measuring knees, and then you say there's a difference of $\frac{1}{16}$ “(between what?), and then you ask me if I want to call the whole thing off. Say! Where are you going to wear this ring, anyway? Please explain most promptly and clearly, giving diagrams if necessary.

Another letter from my mother today. In every one she asks for a snap of you. I keep telling her I haven't got any, but will send one soon, also a photograph. What about that photograph, honey? You haven't said a word about it. Understand, mother and I want ACTION! I can't send her one of the snaps I have of you with New Zealanders glued all over you. It's hardly fitting.

I hope you will let me know your decision regarding the ring soon. As I said before, it is entirely up to you, honey.

Where did you find out that our lovely banana ship was sank? Did you hear any details, such as where, when, how, how many saved, etc?

I lay down after lunch today to have a quick nap, but I was bothered with horrible dreams. I dreamt that I was eating Christmas dinner in Nordhorn. God forbid! The only pleasant part about it was that Bus and I killed enormous quantities of Scotch beforehand, which is likely

enough to come true anywhere. Incidentally, Bus says he is very *fâché* (angry) at you because you didn't phone him in London. And I had a letter from Mac from Ripon (England) and he is very *fâché* with me for going and getting engaged without "letting him in on it" – whatever that means. He says, "Your good taste is exceeded only by the dexterity with which you handled the whole affair." Now what does he mean by that? He asked me to send you his best, and he pleads for an invitation to the wedding.

I had another invitation for us today for our next leave, this time from my friends in Somerset. We are going to have a hard time picking & choosing, we'll have so many.

Well, honey, news is still scarce in Nordhorn and Bus beckons with a bottle of Scotch, so I had better go before he drinks the whole damn thing himself.

Goodnight, darling.

All my love,

Bill

27th May 1945

Dear Willie:

Hello, sweetheart! How's my favourite therp tonight? Hope you have had a more exciting day than I have had. I started the day off with a hangover and had to undergo a church parade this a.m. which was far from pleasant in my condition. I lay down after lunch and after a couple of hours I was feeling sufficiently strong to tackle the notes on the lecture I have to give tomorrow. After an hour of wading through figures on the Veterans' Land Act and Insurance Act and whatnot, I was feeling worse than ever.

The only bright spot on the horizon today was Jack Benny's radio program which came out after supper. He was very funny tonight. Did you hear him?

There was no mail delivery today, consequently no letter from you, consequently no sunshine.

I must to bed early tonight to try and gather strength, because tomorrow is going to be a very trying day. First of all, work on the road, with which I am so fed up I could scream. Then I have to give this wretched lecture at 1 o'clock. And in the evening, this smoker is going to be held, and I'll probably blow my top trying to play a song I don't know for a guy that can't sing anyway. So all in all, I'm not looking forward to tomorrow.

I'm afraid that's about all for tonight, honey. Sorry, I lead such an exciting life that it's impossible to begin to describe it.

'Night, darling.

Much love & kisses,

Bill.

28th May 1945.

Hi Honey:

This is very much of a quickie as I am off to the wretched smoker in a few minutes and will probably be too late to write when I come back from that. We had a rehearsal this afternoon and it wasn't too grim. I imagine if the audience is well primed with punch and beer they may appreciate it all right.

The lecture went off at 1 o'clock as per schedule and, as I had feared, people asked me all kinds of questions I didn't have any notion of. However, it's all over now.

The old postal corps let me down today. I got a letter from my mother, but none from my gal. My mother is back home again now & is feeling much better.

As usual it's been raining on and off all day. What a country!

Sorry I haven't any more time or news for now. One of these days I'll surprise by writing two pages.

All my love, darling.

Bill.

29th May 1945.

Darling:

The old CPC came through again today with another fascinating eight-page job from one Lieut. W. Perry.

Strangely enough, it is dated the 26th (Friday). As the last one was dated the 23rd that would mean there are two missing. However, I presume the letter was written on the 25th (which really was Friday), in which case there is only one missing. I have learned to not take your dates too seriously.

Thanks for the two snaps. They are really good. I'll let you know how many of the lads concerned would like copies. I am anxious to get my own snaps, especially the ones I took of a certain gal I know. I left the sun glasses on purposely for that snap. I thought it would make me look more glamorous!!! And speaking of pictures, I am très fâché that that photograph hasn't already been taken and is in the mails. Please consider yourself mildly brassed off. Still speaking of pictures, one of the officers from our HQ was down in Brussels last week and he dropped around to Bugle's to see if mine were there, but they had already been posted. So they should turn up here somewhere around the end of next month.

Say! What is this so-called "material" you saw in Hayward's Heath and spent all your pounds on. Was he a Canadian officer, tall, short, thin, fat, blonde, or brunette? Please supply full details.

O.K.! So your passing the buck on the ring question again, eh! I'm just about fed up trying to get anything definite out of either you or my mother on the question. I wash my hands of it entirely. The two of you can decide between you now – I'm finished. I gather you had a letter from her, as you say you wrote her two Air Mail letters. Well, now that you are on speaking terms, you can talk it over with her. If you won't give me a definite answer one way or t'other, I refuse to have anything more to do with it. So, Miss Perry, this is your last chance.

Bus and I played in the first round of the bridge tournament tonight. We played a couple of sappers, one of whom was a cracking good player. Too bad he didn't have a stronger partner.

It was a very close game. We played twenty-four hands, and right up to the last hand it was anybody's game. Gee! I pulled an awful boner, honey. Bus and I bid a little slam in hearts, and I had it in the bag, and what did I do but miscount the trump and forget there was still one out. So I went down one. Did I feel foolish? However, in spite of my terrific blunder, we won by a small margin.

Well, the smoker went off all right last night. None of the chaps I was playing for pulled any terrific boners and, strangely enough, neither did I. I don't like smokers particularly, but I couldn't very well avoid getting mixed up in this one. It was O.K. from the entertainment angle, but, like all smokers, it got rather rowdy towards the end. You will be glad to hear I am able to report that I was completely sober all night and behaved like a model gentleman.

One of our sergeants just came back from Paris and he was telling me all about it today. He says the same thing as everybody else – that it is the most wonderful place he ever visited in his life. Gee! I wish we could get there. With all the drag you have, would there ever be any chance of you getting there from England?

Well, honey, I guess that's about all for tonight. Tune in again tomorrow night at approximately the same time and hear Bill Brown sing, "I love you, I love you, I love you" in C sharp major.

All my love, darling.

Bill.

P.S. I forgot to tell you I had a haircut today so if this letter has whiskers on it you will know why.

P.P.S. Bus & the O.C. both send their love.

30th May 1945.

Dear Willie:

Well! Never before in my short and uneventful history have I ever rated eleven letters in one mail. Four of them are especially important because they were from you. The others were practically all from various friends and relatives congratulating me on getting engaged to the sweetest girl in the world. Don't ask me when I am ever going to get around to answering them, because I haven't any idea. I am seriously considering having a standard news sheet printed once a month to send to all my friends. That's about the only way I'll ever get caught up.

All your letters are now accounted for up to two days ago. The ones I got today were dated the 24th, 26th, 27th & 28th. I'm glad you finally heard from my mother, and I was especially pleased to see the cable from your mother. I will try to write her tonight and present some excuses as to why I am a month late in performing my social obligations. The real reason, of course, is that I was too starry-eyed to think of it until my mother checked up on me. But do you think I could put that in a letter?

I think my mother meant it when she said she was afraid she would have an old bachelor on her hands. She said in a letter tonight that she was old and tired and it was high time someone else took on the job of pinning my ears back.

Your visit to Marg's uncle's place sounds very fascinating – especially the part about the salmon & the asparagus. But honey! After all the good work you did on the tennis and biking, how many pounds did you go and put on that night? My mother says, "I will send Willie some chocolates or cigarettes. Which does she prefer?" So I immediately dispatched an urgent cable, "For heaven's sake do not send chocolates love."

You have certainly had an exciting time with Marg's husband bouncing in and out and phoning and what not. Glad to hear you finally got into some decent quarters. It makes a difference.

Thanks for the offer of the raincoat, but I already have two which I don't know what to do with. However, I have a good suggestion. Just keep it until I get there and we will sit on the grass together on it. Yum yum!!!

Say! Your own poetry is pretty good stuff. The variation in the metre is particularly good, I thought. I shall have to see what I can do about writing some original stuff.

My mother brings up the ring question again. She hasn't been able to get down town yet to look the situation over, but she asks if I want her to send over my gold signet ring for you to wear. I haven't worn it for some years and it is rather plain. But if you do decide you want to wait until you get back to Canada and pick your own engagement ring, we could have the signet ring altered to fit your ring finger and have it sent over. It is a little more elegant than the iron ring. Let's have an answer on this business, eh! No more passing the buck.

Bus and I were eliminated from the bridge tournament tonight by a mere 110 points after twenty-four hands involving some three odd rubbers. We only pulled one boner, but it cost us 800 points, while our opponents pulled boner after boner, but it never seemed to cost them very much. However, c'est comme ça.

Well, honey, I guess that's about all for tonight. I must leave a little time to write to your mother. I will probably do a considerable amount of chewing on the end of my pen.

All my love, darling.

Bill.

31st May 1945

Dear Willie:

Hi honey! How's things and stuff tonight? No mail from you today, but after four letters yesterday, what can I expect? The only mail today was a tender letter from my late batman who is now in hospital having some more shrapnel from an old wound pulled out of him. We did get a Naafi issue, which brightened the otherwise dark horizon a bit, consisting of soap and champagne.

There was an Army show tonight, called "Kit Bag's Revue" which was pretty corny. If it comes your way give it the bird. They had a fairly good orchestra which nearly blew us off our chairs when they turned on the horsepower. The pianist was pretty good too. He played Warsaw Concerto, which sounded O.K. The main trouble with the show was that it was an all-male job, and I prefer all-(or nearly all-) girl shows.

Bus just asked me to send you his love – Mark III variety. He had a letter from Jeanie tonight. She is expecting to go to England shortly, as she says they have scads of new girls around there. She says Mac left for Canada last Saturday.

I wrote to your mother last night and explained to her where she had fallen down in your training and general discipline. But I told her not to worry too much as I was rapidly getting the situation under control.

There doesn't seem to be much to write about tonight. Life continues to drag on, and I continue to miss you like Paderewski would miss his left arm. No word of any move yet. Personally, I'm not in any hurry to move at all, as we will never be more comfortably quartered than we are here, and the non-fraternization rule doesn't bother me a bit.

I guess that's about all for tonight.

Good night darling,

Much love,

Bill.

Notes to above: Warsaw Concerto

This marvellous composition comes from the British Wartime Film "Dangerous Moonlight" and starred Anton Walbrook as a Polish Royal Air Force Fighter pilot, Composer and Pianist and was composed by Richard Addinsell

Also: from Wikipedia:

Ignacy Jan Paderewski, [GBE](#) (Polish: [iqˈnatsɨ ˈjan padɛˈrɛfski]; 18 November [O.S. 6 November] 1860 – 29 June 1941) was a [Polish](#) pianist and composer, politician, and spokesman for Polish independence.^[1] He was a favorite of concert audiences around the globe. His musical fame opened access to diplomacy and the media.

1st June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hi honey! Your letter of the 29th (Tuesday was the 29th, darling, not the 30th – you had it right the first time) just came in tonight as I staggered in after a game of volleyball we played against the sergeant, and lost. What's the idea of hitting the road again? Didn't I tell you I wanted you to settle down somewhere long enough to do a few odd jobs, such as make a decision about a ring and get your photograph taken? And Basingstoke! Of all places! What the hell?

Now see here, young lady, if you don't stay put long enough to attend to these matters, I am going to come over there and take personal charge of you, and put you through a very strict and rigid period of discipline. How come you are always the joe that gets moved around on these odd jobs? These hospitals pass you around as if you had leprosy. However the 5th Fd. Coy. has a standing application in for you whenever you have been kicked out of all the hospitals in the Canadian Army.

Thanks for the snaps. Very glad to get them even if they didn't turn out any too well. I never could take very good pictures on that machine. It's far too complicated for my simple mind. Besides, the film I was using was somewhat aged.

That's an awful address you have now. I don't know whether my envelopes are big enough to get all that on them. Hasn't the Army found any abbreviations for "neurological," "plastic," and "surgery"? I shall be forced to cut down the length of my letters if I have to write all that every night. And if I cut them down at all, there will be practically nothing left.

Al Dixon and Old Ed came back tonight. Was I ever glad to see them, as I have had to run three platoons the past two weeks instead of just one. All had a first class leave, and Old Ed thinks I lost out when I didn't go on the course he was on, because he lived in a hotel and slept in a bed with a mattress about two feet thick. After the dog's life I've been leading the past couple of weeks, I think he's right. The Major and I haven't been on speaking terms for about three days.

Al brought some songs back from England and we were trying some of them over after the volleyball game. He is much too bedraggled to do any serious singing, though.

Well, honey, once again, I am afraid, I have reached the end of my news. Strange to say, I still love you very much. I even miss you a little, and sometimes I go so far as to wish you were here.

All my love, darling,

Bill.

2nd June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey! Here I am again, with as little or less news than usual, but with a heart overflowing with love and stuff (woo woo!!).

The postal orderly went away today on a 36-hour pass, of which I take a very dim view indeed, on account of because that means I won't get any letter from you. However, better than nothing, there was a left-over from yesterday's mail which I got at noon. It was the parcel of ties you sent on the 22nd. Thanks a million, honey. Those ties all look like they are brand new. Didn't you ever wear them? Draper was very pleased with the hat badge and asked me to thank you for him.

Half day off today. Didn't do much this afternoon except go over and have a shower. I am feeling very much happier today than I was a year ago today. It was on the 2nd of June 1944 that we embarked at Southampton. We pulled out about supper time and anchored off the Isle of Wight for three days. We had a fair time on board ship. There were excellent meals & plenty to drink, but it was sort of the same feeling as the man who is condemned to be hanged getting his choice of delicacies for his last meal.

I am beginning to get a little worried about those photographs of mine. They have been on their way from Brussels for more than two weeks now, and they should have arrived. I asked them to register them, which I hope he was able to do.

My good old hay fever has been bothering me a bit this week, not too badly, but badly enough to be uncomfortable. Did I ever tell you I suffer from hay fever? Horrible stuff.

School starts on Monday. I was looking over my Algebra this afternoon, and I still have to do some work on my Physics. It will probably be rather dull, but anything would be better than working on that ___ road.

I may take a run up the line tomorrow and see if I can find John Leitch. I haven't seen him for a couple of months now, and we will have lots to talk over.

Don't think I have any more news tonight, honey. Old Ed has produced a bottle of Scotch to keep us amused, so we won't die of boredom (or thirst) tonight.

Much love, darling,

Bill.

3rd June 1945

Dear Willie:

Hello, honey. The postman just came in a few minutes ago with your two letters of the 30th and 31st. Of all the useless things to send me – five snapshots of myself, and not one of you. What the hell do you expect me to do with them? Pin them up in my mirror?

The pub set-up sounds pretty good to me. How is the accommodation at the “Stag & Hound”. It sounds like a good place to hang out when I come to England. Then whenever you have to work, I could be doing some useful drinking. What do you think of that idea?

So the decision on the ring question has finally been made, eh. Thank God for that! O.K. honey, I’ll write to my mother and tell her what we want and then we’ll see what she can do about it. I had a letter from her today and she is feeling somewhat better, although her ears are still giving her some trouble. She really is delighted about my engagement, and she can hardly wait to meet you. I have had letters from practically all the family now and they are all delighted. So you are assured of a big welcome when I take you home.

I took a ride up the line this afternoon to find John Leitch, and after driving 50 miles, I finally found his unit only to discover that he had left about half an hour before to go to Bremen (Germany) on a “swanning” trip. So I left a note for him and asked him to come down as soon as he could.

I had a letter tonight from Mia Komor, the girl in Tilburg (Holland) at whose house we had our mess when we were there. I believe I showed you pictures of her and her husband when you were here. The poor girl had just found out that her elder brother, who was taken a political prisoner about a year ago, had been shot by the Germans last August in a concentration camp at Vught (Holland), which is near s’-Hertogenbosch. Naturally, she was very upset. Bus and the O.C. are down in Tilburg this week-end and Bus was planning to stay at her house.

Thanks for the cartoons re the subject of married life. Is that what I am to expect after we are married? Maybe I had better reconsider.

I sent your friend Barb Ross' address to my mother some time ago, but I guess she probably moved to Brantford before my mother could get in touch with her. If she gets back to Toronto I hope she will get in touch with my mother, as I know she would like to meet her.

Our classes are starting tomorrow and I have to give a class in Physics at 9 and a class in Algebra at 10. So far, I have done practically nothing in the way of preparation, so I think I had better get at it.

I am glad to hear you are finally on your way to get your photograph taken. I can hardly wait to get it. So far, there is no sign of mine.

That's about all for tonight, honey. I still love you even if you are working in a nut – house and living in a pub.

All my love, darling,

Bill.

Note: Link to Vught concentration camp

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Vught.html>

4th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

I have just finished writing to my mother telling her of your final decision on the ring question and giving her the go-ahead as soon as she can. I explained your preferences about white gold and small diamonds, so we'll see what she can produce. I don't know about this diamond and gold business, though. I authorized her to dispose of two ten-dollar war savings certificates which will be due in a couple of years, and it may be that the white gold will contain just a wee bit of chromium and the small diamonds may be just a teeny weeny bit smaller than what you had in mind. But you can rest assured that the most important item, namely, that the ring is $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in circumference, will be well looked after.

No letter from you tonight, but I did have a very nice one from your mother, which, of course, crossed mine that I wrote the other night. She agrees with me that you need a little beating into shape, but she thinks I ought to be able to do it all right. It was an extremely nice letter, and I was very pleased indeed to get it. There was a short footnote from your sister, but your mother had cut her off pretty short for space, and she had room enough to say she hoped we would be home soon, and no more. I also had a letter tonight from John Combes. He says, quote, "You have picked a treasure, I know. I feel a kind of fatherly interest in her myself, and am glad you are going to wed someone I know and approve of," unquote. Imagine Combes ending a sentence with a preposition! I must speak to him about that. But he sure hit the nail on the head when he mentioned treasures. He was at the transit camp on his way from the U.K. the night of the 4th-5th of May. He said he thought of looking you up, but he wasn't sure whether or not you were still there.

School started bright and early this morning and somehow I managed to struggle through one hour of Physics and one of Algebra without getting too badly tied up. In addition to giving those two subjects, I am taking one, namely bookkeeping, which the O.C. is giving. It really is interesting and, as it is a subject about which I know nothing at the moment, I feel I will get quite a bit out of it.

Happy anniversary again! We have had several little ones, but this is our first big one. I hope we don't have many of these before we start celebrating wedding anniversaries. How about you?

We had our second volleyball game against the sergeants tonight, and we got licked just like we did the first time. We're getting better, though, and I think we'll lick them the next time.

I guess that's about all for tonight, honey. Sorry, no poetry tonight. Just a great big bunch of love and a couple of million kisses.

Bill.

6th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hi honey. My two old friends, Underwood and Leitch, have done their best to get me drunk tonight, but they have been far from successful. Leitch appeared as per my note of Sunday, about four o'clock, and since then we have killed a bottle of scotch, and four bottles of champagne.

Honey, they have been trying to persuade me to get my application for marriage in immediately in case we want to get married in England, and I must say, I think it's a pretty good idea. So I am going to put in my application tomorrow. And honey, how about you investigating whether or not you have to put in an application too. And if you find you do, honey, please put it in right away – just in case we find that due to the good old army, we find it advantageous to get married in England. (Don't forget that the Army will pay us \$45.00 a month).

As today was a holiday, the mail orderly had a holiday, so there was no letter from my sweetheart. However, there will be two tomorrow – I hope.

Well, honey, that's about all for now. Drunk or sober, I love you like nothing on earth, and I'm counting the minutes until I get to England.

All my love, darling,

Bill.

BOX: FOLDER	3:35
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6th June '45

Dear Willie:-

Hi Keed:- Your intended is tight so, as the only sober one present, I'm writing (?) you a brief note.

We, Jack & I, have practically set your wedding date. Is Vancouver on or about June 1st 1947 okay? Barb. (my wife, I have one you know) couldn't) and I couldn't possibly travel to Winnipeg. We will have a family of three by the time Bill gets home – the Zombie Jack feels the same way.

You, my sweet, are a heel. You promised to contact me in England and didn't. Have you a satisfactory explanation?

This letter is lieu of one to my wife – you may have to explain that one too.

Anyway I hope you & Billie have a lousy life if I'm not there to help to you get married.

Yours (a supposed [illegible])

Bus

BOX: FOLDER	3:36
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Hello Willie,

You can probably judge that there's a bit of a "do" on tonight. Having missed the scotch I'm comparatively sober. Bus and Jack have been impressing on Bill the many reasons for getting married just as soon as possible. I must admit I agree there. No, Bill does NOT disagree but, like anyone in the army, does not know what, when, how or why anything might happen.

How are you? Hope you can again pay us a flying visit. Bill – lucky lad enjoys the greatest benefit but the rest of us did enjoy having you and would enjoy it even more again.

Bill seems to want to seal the envelope so must close. Bye-bye for now.

My very best.

Ed (?)

6th June 1945.

Dear Willie,

Billie has been plying me with copious quantities of champagne etc. so don't worry about what follows but ---

We have convinced each other that the happiest days of our lives were when we were first married and thereafter and the sooner you two decide on the fateful day the better. Bill and I have decided to take a leave at the same time and whether you are continuing on your present stand or have decided to become the happy couple that we have been you will spend at least part of your leave at our apartment.

Evidently Martie lives at Horsham (England) and has an apartment with lots of room for friends and guests and there would be no one more welcome than you and Billie. Martie and I have decided after three years of married life more or less apart that there have been no more happy days in anyone's lives – new ink –new pen.

Now see here shrew ball I know you both are the best in the pack and while it is very fine to get married in Canada at some later date let's start the ball rolling as soon as possible. I know you will be annoyed later if you don't.

So long for now Willie and I wish you all the happiness I know will be yours.

Jackson

7th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

You see what you are in for when you carry on a "letter a day" correspondence. Every now and then comes a time like last night when some quiet celebrating is in order, and the mail must go through, so the two, mail and celebration, become rather closely connected. I hope the letter that left here this morning bearing my name didn't shock you too much. It was good to see Leitch again.

Two letters from you tonight, written the 2nd and 3rd. Life seems to be just as pleasant at B'stoke as at C'field. Your lazy Sunday sounded grand.

I am writing this from my bed tonight. No! I haven't got a hangover. I've had a sore throat for the past few days and it finally got me down this afternoon. So I went to bed and took the surest cure, and now I'm feeling much better.

I don't find this a very comfortable way to write and there is no light in this corner of the room, so I think I will fold up pour ce soir.

All my love, darling,

Bill.

8th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Here I am again trying to write and lie flat in bed at the same time and I am finding that it doesn't work very well.

I thought I was O.K. this morning so I got up and went to classes. But I came home shortly after lunch with a rather violent chill so I've been flat on my back sweating it out ever since. I guess I'll have to go and see the M.D. tomorrow. It's an awful bore though he lives 15 miles away. What I really need is a physio to look after me. How about you? Would you come back and take the job on?

No mail tonight, much to my disappointment. I guess that's all for now honey. It's a pretty short letter but it's just to remind you I still love you.

All my love, darling,

Bill.

9th June 1945.

Dear Willie:s

Hello honey. Writing is a little easier tonight as I am sitting up in a proper bed for a change.

I was going to go up to see the M.O. this morning, but the 2 I/C decided it would be a better idea if the M.O. came down to see me. So I stayed in bed and he rolled down shortly after lunch, and after punching and probing me decided I should be in hospital. So here I am in 6 C.C.S. in Almelo, which is housed in a Dutch hospital and is very clean and nice. I am in a semi-private (?) (three beds) ward. One bed was occupied by an artillery captain with a broken ankle, and the other bed was just occupied as I started this letter by a joe they carried in on a stretcher and hasn't done much yet but moan.

The N/S has been all over me with drops, pills, fruit juices, blood tests, irrigations and God knows what all, but she has left me alone now for a couple of hours. A Dutch Sister was the last to disturb me for the blood test. They figure I have enough tonsils left to have a slight case of tonsillitis, in spite of the fact that my mother paid very good money about twenty-two years ago to have all those things removed. So it looks like I'm stuck here for a few days, after which I shall probably go back to the unit directly, so don't send any mail here. Someone will come down in a few days time and bring me my mail. It came in today before I left the unit and amounted to absolutely nothing. So I guess it will be Tuesday or Wednesday before I hear from you.

As a matter of fact, I'm not sorry to be here, and it feels pretty good to crawl in between some white sheets and have someone to look after you. Confidentially, honey, I wish it were you. Couldn't you be transferred to 6 CCS for a few days? 'Twould boost my morale countless hundreds of percents.

Well. I am afraid that is all for tonight. I can see life here is going to be just as uneventful as it was in Nordhorn – maybe more so.

All my love, darling,

Bill.

10th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hi honey! How are you tonight? Hope you are getting a bit of mail these days. Our mail point is looking madly about the country and we haven't had any for days. Bus was down to see me this afternoon. The mail came in before he left, but there was none.

I am glad to report a slight improvement in the state of health tonight. My temperature has dropped a bit and my throat isn't nearly as sore. However, I guess I will be here for a few days yet. Didn't get much sleep last night. I had to keep turning over about every two minutes as my neck was so sore. The only diversion occurred at 2 A.M. – pill time. The orderly came in with a couple of pills for me and a couple that were supposed to be for the chap in the next bed, who also has tonsillitis. But the orderly had his signals crossed a bit and insisted on feeding them to the third occupant of the room who has a broken ankle. We tried to talk him out of it, but he was determined.

Bus and the rest of the lads think I should try to be SOS the 5th Fd Coy as it has such a low priority for return to Canada. However, I'd just as soon stick with it until I've had my next U.K. leave, then I'll see what can be done about it.

They certainly start life early in these places. They woke us at 5.15 and we were all washed and shaved by 6.00. Breakfast about 6.45 and then nothing happened until about 11. Is that the way you work too?

Don't think there is much more to write home about tonight. Bus is coming down again on Tuesday, so that is the earliest I can expect any mail from you. I hope there will be lots then.

Good night, darling.

All my love,

Bill.

11th June 1945

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. I'll bet your face is all red because I have been thinking about you all today – not to mention the days for about five weeks preceding it. I'm feeling better tonight, glad to say and I am starting to show a little interest in food again. In fact I just bought half a dozen eggs from a Dutch kid. Temperature has dropped – in spit of what the N/S says. She popped the thermometer into my mouth about two minutes after I'd had a throat irrigation. They are going to keep me here and let me go back to my unit rather than send me to base and make me go through reinforcement channels. Although Bus says I am crazy to go back. He figures that any other unit is better on account of the 5th's low priority for going home. But, at the moment, I stand high on the leave roster, so I want to go back. Bus promised to come down tomorrow and I hope there will be thousands of letters from you. Not only are the bright remarks running out, so is the ink.

Good night, sweetheart.

All my love,

Bill.

12th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey! My temperature soared above all previous records today and there were doctors and nurses galore running around. The reason – Bus arrived in about 9 AM bearing no less than four of your literary gems, dated the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th. Now I suppose it will be days again before I get any more mail from you, which is a very black thought. Bus was none too pleased when I gave him your LOVE. He thinks you should do better than that. Incidentally, I don't! So don't let it worry you. He is off tomorrow to Ghent and Brussels for a few days on a course. He hopes to see Jeannie tomorrow, but he thinks she may have already left.

Is Elfie Saunders the one that was on the Bayano with us? I don't seem to recall the name "Elfie". I know Jim Northey slightly. He comes from a well-known Toronto family, and I know some of his cousins and stuff quite well.

I heard from my mother today for the first time in over a week. She had received two Air Mail letters from you. Honey! What on earth did you say to her? You certainly make an impression on her because after she had read your letters she sat down and had a good cry, and she doesn't do that often. Before you wrote, she was all for this engagement of ours. But now she is quite convinced that her son is nowhere near good enough to be your husband. So see what you've done!

She tried to get hold of Barb Ross but found, of course, she was in Brantford. However, she had hopes of seeing her before she left for Winnipeg.

I am coming along here fairly well now. I am able to eat regularly (although not much) and my throat has practically ceased to give trouble. But my neck is still about twice its normal size due to swollen glands. The doctor said today he thought I would be here another five or six days yet. Bus thinks I am crazy to try to get back to the 5th. Latest figures seem to indicate that the 5th can not expect to land in Canada before June 1946. Wouldn't that be sweet! However, rumors still abound on every side, and probably tomorrow we will hear that the 5th will be home by mid September.

I guess that's about all for tonight. I love you still, in a rather "sulfa" sort of way the last few days. But just wait until that leave comes up.

Good night, darling.

Bill.

13th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hi honey! How is everything? I have been reading murder stories all day and I am fed up with them. I wish I could summon enough ambition to write a few of the dozens of letters I owe to people. I certainly have the time. But something is lacking.

My temperature is back down to normal again. As that is the most interesting bit of news I have for you, you can see what a killer of a day it has been for excitement. The Protestant padre was in for a few minutes and talked to me. He comes from Winnipeg, but I don't know his name. The R.C. padre is a much more interesting man to talk to. He has really been around. No visitors from the 5th today but I expect someone will be down tomorrow with the mail (I hope).

It has been a cold dirty day and the hospital staff all envy the patients for being in bed.

I forgot to ask you if you voted in the Federal Election and, if so, whether you picked a winner or not. News of the results seems a little vague but it doesn't look as though the Liberals can get a clear-cut majority.

Sorry to report that you've had it for tonight. I love you very much indeed.

Goodnight, honey.

Bill.

BOX: FOLDER	3:45
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14th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey! How is everything ce soir? I was hoping for some mail today as I asked Bus to have a D.R. sent down if nobody else was coming. But no one appeared, so no mail. Bus, himself, is away for a few days on course. Probably someone will be down tomorrow.

I actually got around to writing four letters this afternoon. Marvellous, I thought. I had to do something and I am sick to death of reading detective stories.

I expect I shall be allowed up for a while tomorrow, and possibly I can go home on Sunday. The sister has just been in and given me hell for trying to eat my bread and jam before she could take my temperature. My temperature is O.K. now except in the evening when it generally goes up to 99. My throat is O.K. too. It is just my neck that is holding up matters now. It is almost down to normal size, but not quite, and it is still swollen a bit on one side.

Today has been a killer for excitement. The most feverish moment was when the Maple Leaf arrived. There were several other thrilling episodes, but they all pale into insignificance beside that.

I see that in the constituency where I voted, St. Maurice-Laflèche, the Bloc Populaire candidate was elected. Pretty poor show, what. Poor old General Andy got trimmed again. He's had more beatings since he got out of the Army than he had in it. I shouldn't be surprised to see him re-enlist as a gunner and go to Burma.

I went to work on the glamorous Red Cross girl here for some paper and this is what she produced. I still have lots and lots of the blue Air Mail paper left, but I am running short of envelopes. I always do that. It's on account of because I write such short letters.

Well, honey, I guess that's all for now. If you have to give evidence in court, you can produce this to show that on the 14th of June 1945, I stated that I was still madly in love with you.

Goodnight, darling,

Bill.

15th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

I have received so many letters today my head is in a complete spin. Sergeant May was in to see me this morning and brought me one bunch, and Ed and Al were in tonight and brought me another. Each bunch contained two from you and one from my mother. Besides that there was one from your mother and Doris and several congratulatory letters. Your letters were written the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th and I have read and re-read them. Now the night sister will come in and take my temperature, and I shall probably have to spend another week in this place.

I wrote and told my mother that I was going to marry a girl who didn't drink or smoke, and what do I find out! That she, according to her own written statement, has been traipsing all over London drinking rum and oranges. A fine thing! Don't you think, Miss Perry, that I am capable of doing enough drinking for at least two normal people? Well, I certainly try hard enough. And besides, darling, think of the children. It might have a serious effect on them, you know. Wait until I get hold of that Marg Lunam and tell her what I think of her for leading you astray. So much for that!!!

Re the leave question, honey. I don't like to make any statement on it until I can name a definite date. There is only one to go from the company before I do – that's Clive – but the thing goes on a formation basis, not a company basis. The chap who is no.1 on the formation leave roster is supposed to go on the 25th of June. I am no.2 on the roster, but I can't go until Clive has gone and he hasn't been allotted any vacancy yet. So I don't know what to say. It might be somewhere around the first week of July, but I will know more when I get back to the unit and can have a talk with the formation adjutant. How does it sound? And how are your chances of getting leave at the same time? Not that it makes any difference if you don't, because I'll be parking on your doorstep day and night anyway. But it would be nicer if we could go visiting together. My friends in Worthing would be thrilled to see us, and so would my friends in Somerset.

You feel the same way about the marriage question as I do. Everyone here is urging me on. Today I had a letter from an old girl-friend of mine who was married about a year ago, and

her words were “get married as soon as you can.” And there is nothing that sounds more wonderful to me than getting married on our next leave. But after thinking it over, I realize that there are only one or two drawbacks. In the first place my mother would be terribly disappointed because she couldn’t be there, and I imagine your mother would be too. And in the second place, practically none of our friends would be present. It would be very much a “you-and-me-and-the-minister” affair. What do you think, honey?

The picture that appeals to me most is to see me arriving on the shores of Canada and you waiting at the dock complete with minister, families, license, a ticket to a secluded spot, and a month’s reservations. This method has the added advantage that once married we don’t have to give one another a quick farewell kiss and then write letters to one another for the next six months. Frankly, honey, how do you feel about it?

As you probably already heard my mother and Barb Ross got together and found they were practically related. Anyway, my mother is an old friend of Barb’s father. Barb gave her a photograph of you and now she is convinced more than ever that you are throwing yourself away. So she dashed off madly to buy the ring before you had a chance to change your mind. And now it has bounced back on me again. I don’t know why she won’t deal with you directly now that you are on writing terms. The only part that really interests me is that when the ring is sent out of the country you don’t have to pay the 25% Purchase Tax. That means we can get a \$12.50 ring for \$10.00, which is good. However, here is what she says – “There were three at Birks that I liked – one diamond about the size of one of mine and several small diamonds on either side- all very nice but not by any means anything to put your eye out. They were all set in white gold. I then went into Kents who are very reliable also. I find they are giving a 10% discount to men in the services which is something. There was a solitaire there that I liked very much very plain white gold band, one stone a little larger than one of mine. I liked that very much – it is very plain but good. Barbara tells me Willie is a very tailored type of person and I should think she might prefer it to several smaller diamonds.” Unquote. I told her you preferred smaller diamonds to a large one, but I guess what I say doesn’t count anyway. How does it sound, honey? Probably she has written to you and told you all about it, so ‘twould be best if you wrote and made your comments yourself. Don’t let her talk you into anything. If you think she ain’t doin’ the right thing by you we can always skip it until we get home. But then we don’t get

the 25% purchase tax off, OUCH! The thing is, if she is going to send one it will have to be very soon as she is leaving for Montreal on the 29th. So please write her right away. She also wants to know the size over your knuckle. Good God! I thought we had that fixed up weeks ago. I'm sure I wrote and told her what it was, but I don't think she reads my letters any more – just yours.

I was up and around today for the first time. It wasn't a very nice day so I didn't do much except sit around the room. I got back into bed right after supper.

I am enclosing a letter I got today. The author is a gal on whom I had a very serious crush once. I thought it was an exceedingly nice letter and I wanted you to see it.

I guess that just about winds up proceedings for tonight. By actual calculation I love you exactly 4.97 times as much as I did last night. Sometime I will tell you how I arrived at that figure.

All my love, darling.

Bill.

16th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello darling! How is the fairest flower of femininity tonight? O.K. I hope.

What a field day! I just knocked off six letters in rapid succession, all since supper, and it is now 8 o'clock. It's ages since I have done that. I really can do it if there is nothing around to distract me, but generally, in the 5th's mess, there are all too many distractions. I wrote to your mother and reported on your state of well-being and general conduct. I wrote to my mother and told her you would write her again regarding the ring when you had the dope I passed on to you last night. I wrote to an aged great-aunt in Owen Sound whose husband has just died. I wrote to a not-so-aged aunt in Owen Sound who is a peach – I know you will love her, and I am positive she will adore you. How could anyone help it? I wrote to my friend in Worthing and also to my friend in Somerset, broadly hinting that we might be on leave in the near future and might like to go see them. So I have had a busy little evening.

I was up again this afternoon and sitting out in the garden for a couple of hours. Quite a nice day., though a wee bit chilly. I am feeling much better. They may let me out tomorrow or on Monday. My room-mate, a paymaster, deserted me today to go to No 1 so I am all alone in our three-bed ward now.

I got the enclosed clipping out of the Times that came yesterday. I just love it – it's so typically English.

News is scarce tonight, darling, but my heart aboundeth with love sevenfold greater than when the sun first saw this day. Aint that lovely?--!!!

It's about time I got back into bed and had my temperature took.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

All my love,

Bill.

P.S. I am changing the address on the envelope to see if it makes any better time.

17th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello darling. How are you, and stuff? Hope you had as pleasant a day as I had. It was a beautiful warm day here and I went out and lay in the sun all afternoon. I picked up quite a burn on my face, especially on my oversized proboscis. The doctor decided I should stay a few more days, until Wednesday, to make sure that the glands in my neck settle down again. They are very much better and not sore at all any more, but the swelling hasn't entirely gone out of the. There was a driver down from the unit today, but, as he expected to take me back to the unit, he didn't bring down the mail.

I got around to writing a few more letters tonight, four in fact. I am now about 75% caught up on all my correspondence. Another couple of days like this and I shall have to rack my brains to think of someone to write to.

A brilliant thought struck me today, honey. Have you been collecting your Naafi issue bottle since you have been in England? I hope, I hope, I hope. Not that I ever touch the stuff myself, but when I come on leave I want to be sure that you have all you want to drink. Maybe I could even bring a bottle with me for you. We shall see about that.

A friend of mine from our formation H.Q. rolled in tonight to stay for a few days, and I persuaded the sister to put him in the same room as I am in. So now I have some company again. I have known this chap ever since I joined the Army. We took our training together at Brockville and Petawawa.

I don't seem to have any more news tonight. I still love you very very much, but that's not news to you any more. I believe I mentioned something about that once before. I am counting the split seconds until I see you. Is that news? Do you think you could go out with me some night when I come to England on leave? I haven't a very good reputation, but I shall try to be on my best behavior that night.

Good night, sweetheart.

All my love, Bill.

18th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. The sun shone much brighter than usual today because Bus wandered in early this morning and brought me your letters of the 13th and 14th and also the very cute card you sent. He also brought two news items which affect us considerably.

No. 1 was that my leave vacancy was for June 22nd which is Friday. I was somewhat taken aback at this as I didn't expect it until the end of the month at least. I asked him if I was flying and he said no. So then I asked him to go and see the adjutant and see if he couldn't arrange for me to fly. If he can't, I am afraid I shall have to give up the vacancy until the next one comes along. I won't be out of here until Wednesday and I should have to leave on Thursday, and although I am feeling much better, that horrible two-day trip would make a complete wreck out of me in my present condition. So I won't know until tomorrow what the score is. This is all very silly writing it out like this because if I do go any time this week, I shall probably beat this letter and be there before you know anything about it. And there is absolutely nothing I can do to speed up communications. So much for that. Tomorrow I shall know one way or the other.

No.2 item affects us more vitally than No.1. They require 52 engineer subalterers for the occupation force and apparently they haven't had many volunteers. So they are just picking single joes at random and saying, 'you're it, bud.' They picked on one chap who has 180 points, and one other chap who has considerably more points than I have (I have 96 points). Whether it is going to mean I am in danger of being hooked, I don't know. And whether it would strengthen my position any if we were married, I don't know either. But I do know that I will fight tooth and nail to avoid serving over here one day longer than necessary. They came along and picked several OR's from our company and slapped them in the occupation force. None of them had volunteered for it. I don't know what the score is, but it has me worried. Darling, I hope that if it becomes necessary, you will cooperate in a quick wedding job. There is nothing that sounds more wonderful to me anyway. If it wasn't for our families, I would be all for getting the knot tied quick quick. By the time I come on leave I should be pretty well in possession of the facts.

I was out for a short walk today. I didn't feel like wandering very far, and I was quite ready to come back after I had gone two or three blocks. Then I went out and lay in the sun. It was so hot that I had to move into the shade, and I stayed there the rest of the afternoon.

There are so many rumors about this occupation force running around that it makes your head spin. The R.C. padre was just in and he said he was talking to the CRE of the occupation force last night and he had a complete list of officers he could pick for it – all low-point men – how low he didn't know. I wish somebody would say something or do something. The suspense is killing me.

Well honey, I guess that just about winds things up for June 18th. Oh yes! Have you a telephone at your residence. If so, you had better send me the number tout de suite – if it isn't already too late.

Goodnight, darling.

All my love,

Bill.

19th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. Comment ça va? and stuff. Here I am again with another edition of Brown's Passionate ePistles for Pale People.

Bus was in this morning to report on the leave situation. He was unable to arrange for me to fly, so I passed up the leave in favour of the next one. I think Clive is going to take it. It is a good thing I did because the doctor decided tonight that I should spend another couple of days in here. I was originally scheduled to get out tomorrow, but my neck is still swollen a bit and I think the doctor is nervous of letting me go until it is completely O.K. It would have been foolish to step out of here one day and get on the train for England the next. I am sure it would have laid me flat on my back. That will probably put my leave somewhere around the middle of July, although it is hard to tell. The vacancies are most irregular in the way they come, and it is strictly a military secret right up to the last minute, thereby leaving you lots of time for arranging things. However, we should start to make some plans. First of all, are you going to be able to get some leave when I am there. And if so, what do you want to do? And is there any place close to the hospital I can stay if I have to wait for you to get your leave or if you don't get any? And don't write back and say you will leave it up to me where we spend the leave, because I got in there first and I am leaving it up to you. See?

It was another beautiful day here with lots of sunshine and stuff. Spent most of the day lying in a deck chair absorbing vitamins. I did take time out for a walk and walked for about half an hour. Felt much steadier on my pins than I did yesterday afternoon.

No more rumors about the occupation force. Somebody should make some sort of an announcement soon now.

Mac was in with Bus this morning. He just got back a couple of days ago, after being in England since the end of April. He has lost his beret and was wearing a forage cap and looking like a typical Limey.

My hayfever has been kicking up again today, which is not pleasant. Between it and the sun, my nose looks like a beet.

To wind matters up, may I say, Miss Perry, that I am deeply enamored of you and trust you feel the same sentiment towards me.

Goodnight darling.

All my love,

Bill.

20th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey! How are you surviving the heat wave? I presume you are having it too. Today was a real killer – too hot to lie in the sun for more than a few minutes so I lay in the shade most of the day. Then after supper Gerry (that's my pal who is in the same room with me) and I went for a walk and came back and went to the picture in the recreation hall. The day sister went with us and when we came out she brought a can of grapefruit juice & some ice into our room. Ever good! By the way, her name is Crawford and she was with the No 2 last summer and she knows you. And she says there is another girl here, Marg Harris by name, who knows you very well. She is going to bring her down to see me.

The picture was called "This is the Life." I had seen it before but I was able to sit through it again. Awfully hot in the hall.

Mac was down today. As he expected to take me home, he didn't bring down the mail. So he is going to send it down tomorrow. I found out I have to go back on that XX__X+ road when I go back so I am definitely in no hurry to get back. Clive is going to take the leave I turned down. He goes tomorrow. I am glad now I didn't take it. I will be much more in the mood when the next one rolls along.

Mac had no more rumors on the occupation force. I guess no news is good news.

Well it is very late tonight – almost a quarter to eleven. Isn't that awful. I must get to bed. Usually I am asleep long before this.

Goodnight darling.

All my love,

Bill.

BOX: FOLDER	3:52
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5 Cdn Fd Coy RCE
Cdn Army Overseas
21st June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. Fortune favoured me today with a letter from you, written on the 16th. There are a couple of gaps in your letters, namely the 12th and the 15th. There are a couple of letters from my mother missing, so I suspect there is some mail back at the unit that hasn't found its way down here. Darling, I am sorry to hear that you dreamed your way through "Frenchman's Creek." I shall take you to see it again when I get there. Glad to know the proofs of your photos arrived. I hope the finished product won't take as long to reach you as mine have.

I am definitely scheduled to go back to the unit tomorrow. I have strung this business out about as long as it can be strung. The O.C. has sent warning that I have to take charge of the road when I get back, to which I am not looking forward. Mac was down to see me today and is coming down tomorrow to take me back. I had to help him change a tire this afternoon, and it was hot work, mostly for him, as all I did was stand and watch him and offer advice. The pampered invalid!

My friend Gerry went back today, and his bed is now occupied by another engineer, a chap from 13 AGRE, which is the engineer's equivalent to brigade H.Q. He also has tonsillitis.

We had a terrific old fashioned thunderstorm last night. Today was another scorcher and it rather looks like there might be another storm tonight.

Great chuckles and snorts today when we heard Mackenzie King had been defeated in his own riding by the overseas vote. Best news I have heard for a long time. I do hope the other parties will strongly contest his by-election. I should like to see him get tossed out altogether.

In conclusion may I remind you that I love you very much and I miss you like nothing on earth.

All my love, darling,

Bill

BOX: FOLDER	3:53
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Lieut W.E.K. Brown
5 Cdn Fd Coy RCE,
Cdn Army Overseas,
22nd June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. Greetings from the joe wot loves you to distraction. There were no less than three letters and a parcel from you waiting when I got back to the unit today. The letters were the missing one of the 12th and two later numbers, the 17th & the 18th. My feeling of deep gratitude at seeing the parcel was quickly replaced by a feeling of devout thankfulness that the mail authorities hadn't opened the parcel and promptly popped you into the nearest jail. My sweet, don't you know that it is strictly agin the laws of the land to send those things through the mail? I was very glad to get them, but please don't do it again. I don't want to have to visit you through bars when I finally get to England.

Was most interested to hear of the chappie who is having a toe grafted to his hand. I don't envy him having to lie in bed like that for a month.

I don't think ever saw Hedy Lamarr in the "Heavenly Body" but I've heard of it and certainly agree.

In case you haven't got my mother's latest address, it is

c/o Mrs. Frank L. Packard,
"The Elms"
110 Lakeshore Rd.
Lakeside
Montreal 33. Que.

I wrote and told her some time ago that you didn't smoke, and I authorized her to send you a very "poco" box of chocolates every so often – once or twice a year, or so.

Your friend Marg [?] Harris was down to see me this morning before I left. We decided we had met in the middle of the dance floor in Nijmegen once or twice. We also decided that I am the luckiest guy in the world, but then I decided that long ago by myself.

Believe it or not, the long-awaited photographs from Brussels finally showed up today. They are not as good as I had expected. I shall send one to your mother discreetly from here. I am going to send you two – one big one and one small one. You can take your pick. I was disappointed in the big one. I don't like it as well as the little one. I will try to get them done up and sent off over the weekend.

I arrived back today in time for lunch. Old Ed left for Paris this afternoon. He will be gone about a week and I have to look after the road until he comes back.

Pardon the four – hour interruption honey. Went down to the local flicks to see a movie called “The Picture of Dorian Gray” one of the best pictures I have seen for some time. Rather spooky, though. Something along the Jekyll & Hyde idea. Have you seen it? If not, don't miss a chance to do so. It is extremely good.

That seems to cover everything for tonight. As we say in the land of the Bloc Populaire, “je t'adore”

All my love, darling,

Bill

BOX: FOLDER	3:54
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5 Cdn Fd Coy RCE
Cdn Army Overseas
23rd June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey! Believe it or not I will be in England on Sunday next. I got word tonight I am leaving on Saturday and I shall arrive in London sometime on Sunday afternoon, and I shall proceed immediately to Basingstoke. I hope you can have some sort of accommodation arranged for me, and I also hope you can get away on leave very soon after that.

Bus tried to lead me astray again tonight. We went to the show and then dropped in to H.Q. to check up on this leave of mine, and stayed there from 9.30 to 1.30 consuming such things as Prem sandwiches with the occasional drink of rye thrown in. As usual, I arrived home completely sober, but Bus is pretty well under the weather. So his efforts to lead me astray went awry.

Bus is sitting here bothering me while I write, and he wants me to inform you officially that he wants one of your photographs to send home to his wife, to put on the table beside mine. May this matter receive your immediate attention please.

I think that that covers just about everything for tonight, honey, except that I love you very much even at 2:00 AM on Sunday morning.

All my love, darling. I can hardly wait until next Sunday,

Bill

BOX: FOLDER	3:55
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5 Cdn Fd Coy RCE
Cdn Army Overseas
24th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. The long missing letter of the 15th turned up today together with one of the 20th. There is no explaining these mails. I forgot to mention last night that I got one yesterday dated the 19th. Many thanks for the snap. It is much the best one I have seen of you yet. I put it in the snapshot compartment of my pocketbook. I regret to say the letter I wrote last night is still sitting in the mess. Our organization for outgoing mail always seems to fail us on Sundays.

I spent most of the day house-cleaning my room. I seem to have picked up an awful pile of junk since we have been in Nordhorn, 95% of which I don't want and don't know what to do with. I got my photographs done up today and will post and register them tomorrow. The envelope to you contains the big one and three small ones. The two extra small ones are to save me a little trouble. They are for friends in England I hope to see when I come on leave.

Just in case this letter arrives a couple of days before last night, as is quite likely to happen, I had better repeat that I leave here next Saturday and will Basingstoke, trusting that you will be able to find a good pub for me to stay at.

I had a letter today from Clare Boase, my friend in Worthing. She wants us both to go and stay there for a few days. I shall write her tonight and tell her our plans are very indefinite owing to communication difficulties, but I will phone her from B'stoke. She asked for your address so she could write and ask you down.

You probably won't get this letter until Thursday or Friday so I do not expect any answer to reach me before I leave here. I am sorry about the false alarm last week. I hope the cancellation arrived as soon as the scare itself.

I am sneezing my head off today which is most annoying. In addition my neck is swollen up again. The doctor thinks it is due to either the rye I drank yesterday or to the strawberries I ate for supper last night. They used to give me hives.

Tomorrow there is a formation regatta which will be a change from working on the road. I am not taking part in anything, but have to be a judge or something.

Well, my sweet, that is all for tonight. I certainly hope you can arrange your leave all right.

Only seven days!

All my love darling.

Bill

BOX: FOLDER	3:56
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5 Cdn Fd Coy RCE

Cdn Army Overseas

25th June 1945

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. Two super-duper letters from you today, the 21st and 22nd. The old CPC is smartening up. I was most relieved to hear you got those two letters at the same time about the leave that didn't come off. I was really worried about that. Also got two letters from my mother. The latest one was written on the 19th and she had chosen the ring and it was to be sent from Kents within a couple of days. The reason for the delay was that it had to be enlarged a bit. It is coming by registered mail and should be there by the time I get there. So far, nothing has happened to cancel the trip set for Saturday, but I still have my fingers crossed.

I had forgotten about that Naafi issue not working in England. I shall have to bring a bottle from here. You are certainly full of many good suggestions as to what to do with a leave. I'll think about them all over and have an answer on Sunday. I have seen the friends in both Worthing and Somerset. The latter I spent a leave with in April 1944, and the former I saw in London last January. They are both, however, most anxious to meet you. I have a hazy plan burning in my mind. I'll tell you about it later. My leave will be eleven days, counting the day I land as number one. They were increased shortly after VE Day. If you can "meet me in Victoria" so much the better, but it is very indefinite what time I'll get there. It all depends on that Nijmegen to Calais train, and, as you know, anything can happen there, and quite frequently does. They don't time that train with a watch, they use a calendar. Sometimes a joe who expects to be there Sunday doesn't arrive until Monday. It has happened. However, don't let me discourage you. I still hope to be there Sunday.

Two important events today – one very good and one very bad. Bus and Ed have been put on a Repat draft which means they will go before the **Dios** start rolling back. And Al has been put in the occupation Army which is getting pretty close to home. Two other officers from the formation were also picked for it. Al has 78 points. It is all rather grim. If I could only describe to you the awful state everyone is in from the endless stream of rumors that come poring in about points and drafts and occupation armies etc. you could readily understand why I get so excited

and write you mad letters about let's get married immediately, and stuff. It is perfectly awful. It's the war of nerves all over again, and far worse than the last one. If I don't get away the end of this week I expect I shall have a nervous collapse or something. Poor old Al is pretty low tonight and I'm afraid I couldn't do much to cheer him up. It is all darned unfair.

Only six more days, honey. They are slowly, oh so slowly, ticking away.

Our regatta went off fairly well today. It started out looking as if it was going to pour all day long, but it really turned out rather nicely. It is better than working on the road anyway.

The only rumor that is even worth listening to these days is the one to the effect that I love you, and that ain't no rumor – it's solid fact.

All my love, darling.

Bill.

BOX: FOLDER	3:57
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5 Cdn Fd Coy RCE

Cdn Army Overseas

27th June 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. Here I am again, still at 6 CCS but expecting to move off to No 1 in about an hour (it is now 5 o'clock). The old neck feels a bit better today, but it is still swollen something terrible. I didn't really appreciate being wakened at odd intervals during the night to be jabbed with a needle but between jabs I slept well.

I had laid on my batman to come down early this morning to bring mail & to receive instructions as to what to do with my kit in case I went to Gen Hosp. Old Ed's batman showed up instead. Mine was busy taking Al Dixon to Nijmegen to join the army of occupation. Poor old Al! My heart really goes out to him.

I am afraid that the next few weeks are going to be one of those awful periods where the mail will be very spasmodic. The only thing you can do is to keep on writing to the 5th and when I get somewhere where I am going to stay for a while I will write and have them forward it.

The only item of interest in the mail line this morning was some registered mail receipts for the photographs I sent off the other day. And to my delight, one of them had Mrs. Packard's address on it in full. So now I have all the Lakeshores and Lakesides and Lakeviews all straight.

Well honey, I guess that's all for now. I love you beaucoup beaucoup and shall do it toujours toujours.

Bill

5 Cdn Fd Coy RCE
Cdn Army Overseas
28th June 1945.

Dear Willie,

Hello honey! Here I am at the No 1 and wishing very much and wishing very much that it was sometime a couple of months ago so that a certain gal I know would be sitting beside my bed and I could be talking to her and holding her instead of writing to her. I arrived last night about 9 after a snappy journey from 6 CCS in the top tier of an ambulance. I was rather tired after the trip and I slept so soundly that this morning I couldn't even remember being awakened at 0200 for the needle. But the N/S assures me I had it.

The only doctor to examine me just came around about 15 minutes ago (it is now 6:30 PM). He said I would be leaving for base tomorrow – Bruges or Ghent – by train. I asked him about getting to the U.K. and explained the circumstances. He said he didn't think I would have much trouble in swinging it from base. So I still have hopes of getting there, one way or t'other.

Miss Pepper was around this afternoon and was asking after you. She said she owed you a letter, and would tell you she saw me. I mentioned the U.K. angle to her, but she didn't think much of it, so I didn't press it. She certainly is a peach. She had a big smile and a kind word for every man in the ward.

There are a couple of N/S floating around whose faces are very familiar, but I don't know their names. I haven't seen Flora, or any Red Cross girl yet.

Rusty Kent, of all people, popped in today. He is in charge of a lot of the odd jobs going on in the hospital, and came in to see an officer from his unit who is also here. We had quite a chat. He was asking after you and sent his best to you. He is frozen, being acting OC of a unit, and is very fed up with the whole issue.

I also ran into a Newfoundland MO called Jim Roberts. We went to University together and were fraternity brothers. I hadn't seen him since I left school.

The future looks pretty black, with no letters from you in sight for some time. I don't know what time the train is leaving tomorrow, but knowing these trains as I do, I am prepared for anything for a trip of anything to 12 hours. If I can't write you after I get there, I will write you before I leave.

Goodnight darling.

Tons of love and thousands of kisses.

Bill.

5 Cdn Fd Coy RCE,
Cdn Army Overseas,
29th June 1945.

Dear Willie,

Hello honey. I certainly get around, don't I! Here I am at No 12 in Bruges, having arrived about 6.30 by hospital train after a journey that started at 7.30 this morning. It wasn't a bad trip though. I was on a stretcher the whole way so it didn't cost me much effort.

I just had the most thorough going-over I have ever had. The major who examined me here went over me from head to foot and back again and asked me more questions than you could shake a stick at. He mentioned the possibility of going to England, but I don't think he has decided yet just what to do with me. I mentioned you & B'stoke & he passed on a rumor he heard that No 1 Neuro is breaking up. What about it? If it does, will you go back to No 13 or is it going to break up too. I can't possibly get myself into some hospital close to you if you are going to keep toudring the country like a travelling flea circus.

Shortly after I arrived tonight, who should walk in but Harry Hill. Do you remember him? He was one of the 13 padres on the Bayano with us. He went by the name of "lowpockets". He was in to see a couple of his officers who are in the same ward, and we had quite a chat. He was delighted to hear we are engaged and sent his very best wishes to you. He says he also heard that the Bayano was sunk, and then a long time after that, he saw in a Halifax paper that she had just delivered a load of officers there, so he thinks she is still afloat.** He has volunteered for the occupation army and expects to be here another two years. He hopes to get his wife and family over in about a year. He says that Sid Garland was the padre at this hospital until three days ago, when he went back to England. Do you remember him? He was the big fat Newfoundlander who was also on the Bayano. Another piece of news he had was that John Combes left for England recently. He doesn't know whether he is on his way back to Canada or not.

This is a very nice place. Used to be a home for wayward girls, but unfortunately, they have moved the most wayward of them out, so I won't be able to do any "reform work" here. I

am very glad to be out of No 1. I didn't like it there at all. The wards weren't nearly as nice as the sister's mess.

Well, honey. That's all for now. I hope tomorrow to have some more news of my future. In the meantime I love you with all my glands, even the ones that are swollen, and all my heart too. Maybe tomorrow I'll toss in a couple more anatomical terms.

All my love, darling,

Bill.

** This troop carrier, the SS Bayano was scrapped in 1956.

A previous Bayano was sunk off the Scottish coast on March 11, 1915 by a German uboat, a U-27.

12 Cdn Gen Hosp.,
Cdn Army Overseas
1st July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. I hope you are not feeling as blue as I am tonight. I have been thinking about you all day and about how I almost got to see you today, and it is hardly conducive to cheerfulness. I certainly hope some of your letters catch up with me soon. Next to actually seeing you, that is the best medicine I know of.

Things are rather dull here today – no visitors, no newspaper, no excitement, no nothing. There is one other chap in the ward who is taking penicillin. We have decided to mark each N/S on her needle technique each time she gives it, and present a prize to the high scorer. The points we take into consideration are:

- a). The ferocity of the initial jab.
- b). The length of time she leaves the needle in.
- c). Her choice of a suitable spot – i.e. one that is not already in an overcrowded area.
- d). Whether or not she spills some on the sheets.
- e). Her general attitude towards the whole business –
sympathetic or brutal.

We each assess her work and award her a certain number of points out of ten. Then we average the two figures and I mark it down on the back of my “intake output” chart. The high score of ten is reserved for the gal who can give us a shot in the middle of the night without waking us up.

You can see the state of mind I am in. Within a day or so I shall probably start enclosing paper dolls with my letters, and when this damn neck clears up you can expect me at Basingstoke as a patient – and not in the plastic surgery department either.

I have now run out of news so I will give you a list of questions to answer:

1. Has the ring arrived?
2. Have you sent it back to be exchanged yet?
3. Have the photographs I sent arrived?
4. Have your own photos arrived?
5. Have all my letters arrived?
6. Did Al Bishop see you yesterday and tell you I wasn't coming?
7. Did you already know?
8. Were you sorry?
9. Were you glad?
10. Why?
11. Have you completely answered questions 1 to 10?
12. What are your views on the trouble in Syria and Lebanon?
13. Do you agree with the British Attitude? The French? The American? The Japanese?
Give reasons.
14. From the expression $v = u + a t$, express acceleration in terms of v / t .
15. Do you love me?
16. How much?
17. Why?
18. Without looking back at page 2, repeat question 7 verbatim.

Another series of questions will follow shortly. With things the way they are, they are about the only means by which I can make the paper and the envelopes come out evenly.

I love you so much, darling that I have just ruined a perfectly good clinical thermometer. The sister made the mistake of putting it in my mouth when I was thinking about how much I do love you. The resulting explosion showered glass all over the room.

Good night, sweetheart.

All my love,

Bill.

12 Cdn Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas,
2nd July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello darling! Here I am again with a few philosophical observations before the day ends. I am still living from day to day in the hope that somehow some mail will catch up to me. Gee! It's a whole week since I heard from you. It seems like about ten years.

The doctors are still coming around daily and poking me all over. My case is considered very unusual – chiefly because I am daily producing 900 c.c. more liquids than I take in. It just goes to show you what a lot of trouble you can get into when you start measuring things.

Harry Hill was in for a few moments today. He is going back to Germany tomorrow. He said he wished he could tie the knot for us. I hastily agreed, and added that I wished he could do it right then.

Outside of reading whodunits and the Maple Leaf today, I have done nothing but think about you and how wonderful you are and how much I love you and how lucky I am. I hope you will retain a small spark of affection for me after you read the long list of questions I set for you last night.

With all the thousands of letters I have to write and all the time at my disposal, I still haven't the ambition to get started on them. Of course, writing conditions in bed are not exactly ideal. This happens to be one of those beds where the mattress is about a foot shorter than the bed. And when you sit up and prop yourself against the head of the bed in about ten minutes you find yourself sitting on the springs and the bedding all down at the foot.

I guess that is all the more devastating news for tonight. My affection for you grows with each passing minute as a rolling snowball. Ain't that lovely?!!

Goodnight, darling. All my love,

Bill.

12 Cdn Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas.
3rd July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. Hoe gaat het met u?*** (as we say in Holland). I hope you are making the most of this lovely summer weather, but then I'm sure you are.

I think the old neck is beginning to subside a bit. It's down to about an 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ now so it only has another four sizes to go. It feels better and is not aching nearly as much. They are still pairing the penicillin and sulfa thingol to me. I am glad I don't have to pay for the former, or I'd have you out delivering papers or something in your spare time.

Old Harry Hill paid us another visit for a few minutes this morning, but he was definitely leaving this afternoon to go back to Germany. He asked me to be sure and remember him to you, so there it is.

I have never seen such a place in my life for nurses changing hours. They aren't very busy just now, so they spell one another off and have about half their time off. You never know who is going to be on. The keeping of score of the penicillin contest is becoming very complicated on this account. I am the sole scorer now as the other chap stopped his shots last night.

I am hoping that the mail will show up tomorrow or the next day, so then I will have something to write about.

Goodnight my sweet. I love you a thousand times more than you could ever even suspect.

Bill.

P.S. Believe it or not, the paper and the envelopes came out exactly even this time.

***Hoe gaat het met u = How is it going with you.

12 Cdn Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas,
4th July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. I hope you've had a more exciting day than I have. This lying in bed is O.K. for a while, but it gets a bit boring. I have read so many whodunits in the past few weeks that I am quite sure I could go out and commit the perfect murder without a chance of the crime being detected. They have a show here every afternoon just to relieve the monotony, but they won't let me out of bed to go to it, so it doesn't do me much good.

The old neck is definitely better though. The swelling has gone down a lot since last night, and the pain has departed completely. The O.C. of the butchery department was ranging around for a few days as they were considering hacking it up a bit. But it has shown so much improvement that I think they have given up that idea. They have increased the penicillin dose 50%, but I am so used to it now that it doesn't bother me a bit.

I learned today that all this area here is British, and even the mail comes under them. So I have completely given up all hope of ever getting my back mail. I guess I will just have to grin and bear it.

There are some patients leaving here tomorrow for England, but I am sorry to say that yours truly is not among them. In spite of all the talking I have done it doesn't look as if I will get there until I go on leave. I should be able to get some sick leave after I get out of here, but I don't suppose they will give me sick leave at the same time. That would be too much to hope for.

I guess that winds things up for tonight. My dreams are getting better and my letters are getting worser all the time.

All my love, darling,

Bill.

12 Cd Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas,
5th July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. Once again a very dull and uneventful day draws to a close and I take up pen to bore you with a few details of it. No mail, of course, but that goes without saying.

The day was chiefly distinguished by the discovery of two old friends among the hospital staff – one of yours and one of mine. The friend of yours is a girl called Joyce Goodwin from Winnipeg. She had heard from Winnipeg sources you were engaged to some punk over here, and she saw a letter of mine to you lying on the table, so she put two and two together. So she consequently promised me better treatment from the staff from now on. I haven't noticed any change yet though. She certainly is a cheery person – marvellous to have around a hospital.

One of these days I am going to take this wretched pen of mine and trample it to pieces. I think I could do a better job by dipping my finger in a bottle of ink anyway.

The friend of mine I discovered is a dentist called Jim Smith. He was with the ME Company when I was with them (in England) and we used to hang around quite a bit together. He tells me that the Convalescent Depot is a peach of a spot and that I can look forward to a few days out there. I still think I could have a better time in England!

I'm afraid that's all for tonight, darling. I love you very much and I can't help thinking about what wonderful days we could be having right now if it wasn't for this xxx---g neck of mine.

'Night honey.

Bill.

12 Cdn Gen Hosp
Cdn Army Overseas
6th July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Darling! Most unexpectedly two letters arrived from you today, written on the 2nd and 3rd. I was absolutely horrified when I found out how long it had taken some of my letters to get to you. I had to read between the lines, but I got the impression that you had no idea I wasn't coming until you got my letters on Monday. If that happened I will never forgive myself. I can't understand it at all. Apart from all the peculiarities of the mail system, which we are used to by now, what happened to Bishop who was going to convey the message personally? I hope I won't hear that you went up to London on Sunday expecting to meet me, but I am horribly afraid that I will. Darling, I am so terribly sorry. The next time I won't say a word. I'll just turn up.

I have read and re-read your letters a hundred times. I am afraid that the medical staff of No 12 are so interested in my case now that they will never let me go now. The hopes I had entertained of being evacuated to England have all faded to nothingness now. What an army! If you had been stationed here or at No 1 or 2, I would have found myself in England so fast you wouldn't have seen me for the dust. The army definitely hasn't got romance at heart.

There was an Army show here tonight. They wouldn't let me out of bed to go and see it, but I could hear it now and then when the orchestra rose to a crescendo. It sounded good and everyone said it was good.

Darling I am just counting the minutes until I see you, and I am afraid I will have to call on my meagre knowledge of higher mathematics to keep track of them. Of that Army so much as suggests that you set one foot on a ship before I see you. CMHQ will be reduced to a pile of worthless rubble by one engineer single-handed.

I haven't run into any of the N/S's you mention, and I don't see the Red X gal often enough to even find out her name. She is extremely well equipped with cigarettes, books, writing paper etc. but she only comes around about once every three days.

Keep your fingers crossed, honey. Somehow, somewhere, sometime _____.

All my love, darling.

Bill.

12 Cdn Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas,
7th July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey! What a red letter day! A batch of mail came in forwarded from the 5th and there were 15 letters, 8 of them from you. Gosh! By the time I'd read those my temperature had soared to unprecedented heights, and N/s's were dashing madly around with thermometers and alcohol baths etc., and after an hour or so they got me cooled down to the point where I stopped steaming.

These eight passionate epistles were dated 23rd to 30th inclusive. The all important letter of the 1st is still missing so the horrible suspense that started when I got your letter last night is still upon me. Horrible thought! By putting two and two together I figured out that the Mysterious Stranger who phoned you on the 30th must have been my friend Bishop. He normally doesn't have an English accent but under the circumstances it is amazing he was able to make himself understood.

Your dissertation on the ring nearly floored me. My God! If you get so excited about a thing like that, what would you do if I ever gave you a real ring?---not that it is likely to happen, but I was just wondering. I don't know why in the world anyone would ever want two photographs of me, but, honey, anything your little heart desires is yours. The news about another three to four weeks before your photos are ready is most depressing. By that time I am likely to have my toenails bitten right down to the bone. However, if there is one thing in this world that is impossible to hurry, it's a limey.

I am glad you have had a few trips up to London for shows, concerts, etc. Honey, I am terribly sorry that you went to so much trouble phoning all over the place to find us a place to stay, and then I was so ungrateful that I didn't even bother to come. How shameful of me!

Darling. I loved the clipping about the gal marrying the postman. However, don't let it put ideas into your head. I had better have a look at that postman of yours.

Of my other seven letters today, three were from my mother – nothing very startling to say – and one from Bill Moore. He had just returned from English leave & was delighted to hear about us – I wrote him when I was in 6 C.C.S. He urged us to get the knot tied immediately, if not sooner. Sounds like Leitch has been prompting him to work on me, as he saw Leitch in London. He (Bill) sent his best to you. He ran into another old friend of ours in London called Bob Parkinson. You wouldn't know him, but I think Gwen would remember him because, if I recall, he used to take her out now and again at Varsity.

The neck continues to improve, but slowly. It is a good thing I didn't get to England before it was ever cured, as my necking technique would have been seriously impaired. There was an English brigadier accompanied by squads of colonels and lesser lights around today looking at it and poking it and asking questions. Things were complicated today by an attack of hay fever, which is not too pleasant. One of the other chaps in the ward, who has been here for some time, tells me that there was a chap in a while back who had hay fever although he didn't have a trace of it while he was here. And so help me, they shipped him off to Canada, or so this fellow claims. So I've been working it as hard as I can all day. Every time a M.O. comes in I sniffle and sneeze and groan and rub my eyes and ask the N/S for more eye drops. I don't know whether I am making any impression or not.

Well, darling, in case you haven't heard, I love you to distraction and I am thinking of you every minute of the day.

Goodnight my sweet,

Bill.

12 Cdn Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas,
8th July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey! Here I am again with nothing to say and lots of time to figure out how I am going to say it. The chief event of today was when about five o'clock this afternoon, they informed me that they were no longer going to give me either penicillin or sulfadiazine. Thank Heaven for that. The old neck isn't completely cured yet, but it is getting under control.

I just finished writing my mother – and awful struggle with this d-----d pen as it goes dry about every third word. Have you heard from her since she sent the ring? In case you haven't, it is fully insured for three years, so if you should happen to drop it over the side of a high cliff, it will not be necessary to throw yourself over after it.

Do you remember me showing you a photograph of the Packard family? Well Peg Packard, the gal in the VAD's uniform (***) is believed to be on her way to England – in fact she has probably already landed. I can't think why they would want any more VAD's over here now when all the hospitals are closing up.

I also heard that John Combes is back in England now. He left here on a Canada draft, but got off of it in England as he has applied for discharge in England so that he and his wife can go back to Argentina together.

There is a terrific amount of beautiful sunshine going to waste out there the past few days. I have to be in bed and look at it through the window, of which I take a dim view.

Just enough room left to tell you I love you with all my heart, darling, and I miss you like a fish misses water.

Goodnight sweetheart,

All my love,

Bill

** The **Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD)** was a voluntary unit of civilians providing nursing care for military personnel in the United Kingdom and various other countries in the [British Empire](#).

Link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voluntary_Aid_Detachment

Packards are cousins of his father's family.

12 Cdn Gen Hosp.
Cdn Army Overseas,
9th July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. I got two letters from you late last night after I had written to you. They were written on the 4th and the 5th which isn't bad going at all for the army mails. You answered the 18 questions with flying colours. The prize will come in a \$64 kiss to be administered as soon as possible. So old Leitch capitalized on a wedding that didn't take place, did he! I shall have words with that lad when I see him. Sorry to hear the ring is too tight on your finger. I think you could quite safely get it enlarged over there. It is a very simple business and hardly worth sending it back to Canada for. I don't think a limey jeweller could do it any harm. However, if you would rather send it back, Kents will certainly do it, and if you want to wear it, honey, don't wait for me to come along and slip it on your finger. It may be weeks before I get there and think of all the chances you are missing in the meantime to show it to people.

I had a letter from Bus last night too. He sent his love (Mk 11) to you.

Today has been just as devastatingly exciting just like every day in here. I missed another day of grand sunshine. When they do give me permission to go outside the rainy season will probably start. One of the N/S got married today and the whole staff was at the wedding, so I didn't even see an MO to ask him if I could go outside.

I am mortally ashamed of the skimpy letters I have been turning out lately. I lack both the material and ambition to do any better. But I still love you very much and I guess that is the main thing.

Goodnight darling,

All my love,

Bill.

BOX: FOLDER	3:69
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12 Cdn Gen Hosp
Cdn Army Overseas
10th July 1945

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. Just as I was about to write you tonight my friend Jim Smith came down to see me and sat & talked to me until 11 o'clock, so it is now past "lights out" and this must be a short letter.

The long lost letter of the 1st arrived today. Honey, I would have done anything to have spared you that day. I was quite certain that either my letter or my message would get to you in time. But the best laid plans of mice and men__.

The doctor has given me permission to go out in the garden and absorb some sunlight, which is something, anyway. The swelling in my neck hasn't completely disappeared yet, but it is ever so much better.

I guess I had better turn out the light and let these other poor joes get to sleep.

Goodnight darling,

All my love,

Bill.

BOX: FOLDER	3:70
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12 Cdn Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas,
11th July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello beautiful! How is my favourite fiancé tonight. No mail today, no newspaper, no nothing. As I predicted, the weather, now that I have been given permission to get out of bed, has turned treacherous, and today was cloudy and cold, so I stayed in bed. I didn't really mind, though, because I had a very interesting book – "The Late George Apley" of John P. Marquand. Have you read it?

There is one piece of news, rather disturbing, I forgot last night in my hurry. A Fourth Div officer came in a couple of nights ago. During the course of a conversation about road accidents, he mentioned that he had pulled Rusty Kent out from under an overturned jeep a few days ago. He said that he was unconscious, but he didn't know how badly he was hurt. This chap managed to get him an ambulance and that was the last he had heard of the matter. I do hope it isn't serious. I believe I told you that I saw Rusty while I was at No 1.

My future, as usual, is most uncertain. (Has it ever been anything else since you have known me?) At a rough guess, I should say that I will have to stay here another week, and then spend the normal two weeks at the convalescent depot at Knocke – sur – Mer**, a few miles from here. That would mean it will probably be the first week in August before I am in circulation again. What does your future look like in the crystal ball? If there is any danger of your departure for God's country coming at that time, I shall sneak out of here some dark night and swim the North Sea. I suppose it is just as difficult for you to foresee what may be happening at that time.

I have saved the most important news item to the last. I love you to square pieces, and no matter what ill luck may descend on me, I still consider myself by far the luckiest man in the world.

Goodnight darling, All my love,
Bill. ** Belgium

BOX: FOLDER	3:71
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12 Cdn Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas,
12th July 1945.

Dear Willie:

One of the N/S told me this morning that there are 13 patients in the ward, and tomorrow is Friday the 13th, so we are all awaiting coming events with much trepidation (whatever that is).

I was out in the sun for a while this morning, but this afternoon was rather cloudy. Tonight there was an Army show and I have just come back from it. It was held outdoors and it really is a lovely evening. I could think of better things to do with it than sit (or lie) in a hospital – but there is not much point in thinking about that.

The show wasn't bad, but it was one of these all-male affairs which I generally find rather dull unless they are exceptionally well done, which this one wasn't.

The old Postal Corps, which was cooperating admirably for a while has rather let me down the past few days. Today I got some magazines from home, but I have had no letters for several days.

There seems to be a fairly plentiful supply of reading material around, So I don't find the time passing too slowly. I had some good laughs this morning over "My Sister Eileen." **

The only thing I can look forward to is that maybe some time this summer I am going to see you, and that is worth a lot of waiting.

Good night my sweet.

All my love,

Bill.

** 1942 American comedy film with Rosalind Russell & The Three Stooges.

12 Cdn Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas,
14th July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. The old postman came through today with three letters – one from you, one from my mother, and one from Clare Boase. Yours was dated the 10th. Glad to hear you are up and around again. My mother's was written on the 1st. So I find already you are lying about your age – a dreadful thing for a young girl! You told me you were 23, and now in your letter you reveal you are 24. Come on now, how old are you? Never mind, just tell me what year you were born and I will work it out for myself.

I am much disturbed by this mention of drafts and things. I had another go at the M.O. today and told him I wanted to get to England right away quick. He hemmed and hawed, and said I had to stay in hospital for at least another two weeks, and he guessed I was O.K. to travel now, and he finally promised to send me in the next bunch, which is probably late next week. So that is something, anyway. I hope you are still at Basingstoke by then or I may have trouble locating you. Gosh! I have been trying long enough to get there. At last maybe I am going to succeed. I suppose they will try to send me to some hospital in the north of Scotland, or someplace. Just let them try!

I am certainly well equipped for a trip to England. In addition to the clothes I was wearing, my wardrobe consists of one pair of socks and about six pairs of underwear which have since arrived from Toronto by mail. I sent a frantic message from 6 CCS back to the unit, when I found out the score, to pack shirts, socks, shoes, cigarettes, camera, etc. into a pack and deliver them to me at No 1, but I moved so fast from No 1 that they didn't get there in time. However, I have a serge in London and civvies in Aldershot, so I guess I will be O.K.

Today has been a real scorcher. I was out in the sun this pm but it was so hot I could only stand it for half an hour. It has cooled off a bit now though and it looks as if there might be some rain during the night.

I forgot to get some paper from the Red X gal this morning, hence the very cramped writing tonight. This is my last sheet.

When I think that maybe in a week or ten days I might see you, even if it is in a hospital, my heart thumps and my temperature rises out of clinical range. I love you so very much, darling, and I can hardly wait to see you.

Goodnight sweetheart.

All my love,

Bill.

12 Cdn Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas,
15th July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. The CPC brought me another letter from you today written the 11th. They really seem to have the thing working right at this point – one a day, which is the way it should be.

If yesterday was a scorcher today was a double scorcher. It didn't rain last night as I predicted, but it really looks like rain tonight. I got dressed this morning and toddled off to church like a good boy. But it was so hot that I got back into my pyjamas again and lay around gasping for breath all afternoon.

I haven't heard from my mother in answer to the letter I wrote her re the army of occupation and stuff but I was quite sure she would take the attitude you mention. But how about your mother? Have you said anything to her about it yet?

Glad to hear you have John Combes address. I have sort of lost track of him unless the last letter I wrote to his unit catches up with him.

The Basingstoke “swan song” party sounds like a good one. I can well imagine that the members of the staff who have been there for four years do rather peculiar things at times. I must have a talk with this Col. Gould and find out just what the verdict was when he “psychoanalyzed” you. Maybe he has some very interesting revelations to make.

I had a letter from Bus today. Nothing much to report except that the unit is now in Hengelo**, he and Ed have been taken off the repat. Draft, and my stuff was all in kit storage, except my camera. I am going to tell him to send it to you, as that will be quicker than waiting for me to settle somewhere long enough to be sure of getting it.

My name is now on the evacuation list. The chief worry now is this b____y neck. Now that everything is all set for me to go to the U.K. it shows an uncontrollable tendency to improve by leaps and bounds. The M.O. was quite shocked when he saw it this morning. He suggested I

somehow continue to make it swell up a bit or I shall arrive in England all cured. I don't quite know how to go about it though. Do you think hammering it with a boot would do any good?

That seems to exhaust the "stop-the-press" news for tonight. Moving over into the more permanent and important things, have I mentioned recently just how much I love you? I do, you know. I just couldn't begin to tell you. I keep thinking maybe we should get married right away *toute de suite* quick, before you wake up to the fact that you are throwing yourself away. Of course, you would be bound to throw yourself away anyway, because there would never be anyone who was anywhere near good enough for you, least of all me. Don't ever think, darling, that just because I don't know how to tell you how wonderful I think you are, I don't realize it, because I do.

Goodnight, my sweet. I am still ticking off the minutes.

All my love,

Bill.

** Hengelo, Holland

12 Cdn Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas,
17th July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey! My God! What a girl! My darling I don't see how you can possibly sit down at 0215 hours to "dash me off" a letter and come through with 11 pages of chatter just as bright and cheery and newsy as if it was 9 o'clock in the morning and you had just jumped out of bed after a 12 hour sleep. Honey, you're wonderful! There have been times when I, too have sat down at approximately that same hour to write you, but my literary effort never got much further than a short note to say "I love you" and "I'll write tomorrow" and ordinarily, I write you at about 9 o'clock or so of an evening and my letters are so dull that I fall asleep two or three times before I have finished.

All of which is brought on by your letter of the 14th which I received today and in which you casually mention that it is 0215 hours. I too am all in favour of this regular mail service. Long may it continue!

Darling, how wonderful that you are going to the Roman Way Convalescent Hospital! Of course, you couldn't possibly know it when you wrote that letter, but by now you will see that I am bound to end up there very shortly. I will probably go to a General Hospital for a couple of days until I can convince them that there is nothing wrong with me except the evil effects of six weeks in hospital, and that all I need is about three months at the R.W.C.H. The sisters here tell me that that is the only convalescent hospital open for officers right now. If that is so, it is a cinch!

No word yet about when I leave here, but if I can't make that RWCH in ten days from now, you can call me "Roger."

The only thing that worries me is that you say the matron is rather sticky. Does that mean she frowns upon patients fraternizing with the sisters, and that I will have to get special dispensation before I can fraternize with my favourite fiancé? I hope seriously that she and I are

not going to disagree on the question or she will hear some rather rough words that I am quite sure she has never heard before.

As for the leave, honey, it is impossible now to say when I will be able to get it. The procedure here is that when you are discharged you go to CBRG and are granted sick leave from there. However, the procedure is no doubt quite different in England and I am sure you know much more about it than I do. Anyway, the whole discussion can wait until I am “convalescing” at Roman Way.

I haven't heard a word about Rusty Kent and I don't know where to find out until I run into someone who is from that area. I too was most disturbed about it and I certainly hope that it isn't anything serious.

I spent today reading, sun-bathing, playing crib with Jim Smith (and beating him) and getting my hair cut – a major operation after all these weeks. I am determined to be all slicked up for this U.K. trip – maybe I will even get my shirt washed. Tonight there was a movie in the recreation hut and I went and sweltered through it. It wasn't too bad – a thing called “my Reputation” with Barbara Stanwyck and George Brent.

Honey, keep your fingers crossed. It looks like the army is going to give us the first good break since the time they plunked us down in the Stork Club** and said, “There you are kids! What are you waiting for?” And I think it will be a break good enough to make up for the tough ones we have had since.

I love you more than ever tonight. You're wonderful.

All my love, darling,

Bill.

** the Stork Club was a New York City nightclub from 1929 to 1965 considered one of the world's most prestigious. It was raided by Prohibition agents in 1931.

12 Cdn Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas,
18th July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey! In addition to your letter of the 15th, letters of the 12th and 13th also turned up today. The Postal Corps will have their little joke! Glad to hear about your trip to No 22 & the Repat Depot. The ride over sounded very interesting, but you had me completely stopped when you said you drank a “shandy.”*** What the hell is that?

If I knew Peg Glasgow was in the Army I had forgotten it. I remember her very well. She was another of Bob Parkinson’s flames. I can’t say I remember the other girl, but probably if I saw her I’d know her.

Has Phil any justification for her confidence in you as a hairdresser? It occurred to me that if she has you might be able to use that as an additional means to support me.

I am relieved to hear you still think of me with affection. But really, darling, I protest at the thought of being ‘loved’ “a thousand times more than a disgustingly unwholesome chocolate fudge sundae.” I know you meant well, but such violent and exaggerated expressions, super-packed with passion, are most unseemly. Two or two and half times, maybe. But not a thousand times. After all you haven’t known me two years yet.

There is a disturbing rumor afloat today that we won’t be leaving here until Monday. I don’t know whether there is anything in it or not. It’s a cinch we aren’t going tomorrow anyway or we should have heard by now.

It was another scorcher of a day today. I spent a while outside this morning, but I could only stand about an hour and a half in that sun.

I have just finished a very interesting book called “The Final Hour.”*** I go through most of these hospital variety books at the rate of about two a day, but this baby kept me going for three days.

Honey I love you more than anything in the world – yes! even more than that regular monthly naafi issue which I haven't seen the past month or so. Nuts!

Goodnight my sweet,

Bill.

**Shandy is a drink mix of beer and non-alcoholic beverage such as lemonade or ginger ale.

***A thriller by Tom Wood.

12 Cdn Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas,
19th July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey! In spite of cloudy skies the old sun beamed today because your letter of the 16th arrived to cheer me up. I also got a letter from my mother written the 9th. She agrees with me that it is not necessary to send the ring back to Canada to have it enlarged. Any reputable jeweller can do it quite easily.

Our ward filled up suddenly tonight with a large bunch of arrivals from Nijmegen. For some time there were only three of us in here. The draft out should be leaving the beginning of the week. The Colonel thinks I will need three weeks in convalescent hospital, bless his heart.

Re the cartoons, darling – they were much funnier the second time than the first, at least I laughed a lot harder. I wonder why?

The idea of a couple of weeks with you in New Brunswick sounds wonderful. Of course, the idea of a couple of weeks with you anywhere sounds wonderful. I'll bet Marg and her husband are really glad to be back.

It has been rather a dull day – raining outside so I didn't even go out for my sunbath. I just read all day – my usual two books.

Another 1440 minutes have ticked off. "My dreams are getting better all the time." I love you very much, but I can't say the same for this b____y pen.

All my love, darling,

Bill.

12 Cdn Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas,
20th July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. This business of getting a letter from you every day regular as clockwork is wonderful. Your letter of the 17th arrived today. I am glad you learned about the possibility of my coming to England before you left for Roman Way. Your remarks about the General Hospitals are encouraging, but I don't expect to have to spend much time there. There is nothing wrong with me now except the after effects of six weeks in the hospital. I think that three or four months of convalescence at Roman Way with special physio treatment (after hours) should set me back on my feet again. There is still no word as to when we might be leaving. If they know anything about it they keep it a deep dark secret. Needless to say I am ready practically anytime to make the trip.

So the rest of your crowd are on their way, eh! I am glad you are not with them, but I certainly wish that you and I together were with them. What a hope!

So you really are 24. I have been thinking you were only 23. My God! You are practically an old maid. I know a good way to prevent that happening though. If you are at all interested in learning details, forward your application in triplicate through normal channels.

I thought there was going to be a show in the recreation hut tonight but after I got dressed and walked down there, discovered I was wrong. I don't know why – there is supposed to be one every Tuesday and Friday. I had this all figured out as Friday, but could be I am wrong.

I can't think of any more "stop-the-press" news tonight, except that I love you tonight more than I did last night but not nearly as much as I will tomorrow night.

Goodnight darling,

Bill.

12 Cdn Gen Hosp,
Cdn Army Overseas,
22nd July 1945.

Dear Willie:

Hello honey. An incredible thing happened today – no letter from you. I suspect that the reason is that three days ago you moved to Roman Way thereby disrupting the smooth system of communication we had established. I certainly hope so because, honey, it's happened. Tomorrow we leave for merry England. Oh happy day! The Colonel came around this morning and told us. We don't go until the afternoon so I suppose I won't get there until Tuesday. But all the same I have high hopes that before you get this letter I shall at last have talked to you on the phone. That is as much as I dare hope right now. Funny thing, every time I think about it, my toenails curl up. Most annoying!

I got up this morning and went to church like a good boy. I don't know whether that had everything to do with it or not. But anyway, barring accidents I shall be on my way to England tomorrow at this hour. Just think how wonderful it will be when we don't have to write letters every night. I should have bought a new pen before we got engaged. This one is all shot from the unaccustomed strain.

The N/S's have all been popping in at odd hours to tell me my name has been taken off the list. They do that just for the pleasure of hearing me growl at them.

Keep your fingers crossed, darling and your toes and anything else you have handy and before you know it I will be pulling your hair.

Ah! L'amour. C'est magnifique!

Good night my sweet,

Bill.

WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT

Lt. P/A Wilma Perry

and

Lt. William E. K. Brown

have pleasure in announcing their marriage

at St. Michael's Church, Berechurch,**

on Saturday, 25th August, 1945.

Roman Way Conv. Hospital,

Canadian Army,

England.

Reverse: (from Lt. (P/A) Wilma Brown)

Dear Mom:-

Just so you'll really know that we got the knot tied!

The Vicar who married us was Rev. Wiggins and H/Capt. R.L. Seaborn assisted. The latter was the Canadian padre at Khaki University***while the 5th were there.

We were married at 3.30 pm –

Can't think of any other details.

**Link for St. Michael's Church

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Michael%27s_Church,_Berechurch

***Link for Khaki U.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khaki_University

19th November 1945

Dear Sweet Wilma McB.:

Hello, sweetheart darling! How are you on the eve of the big operation? I hope you are not so desperately nervous that that they won't be able to jab a needle into you tomorrow morning.

Do you know what? I miss you something terrible. It seems like months since this morning. I arrived here in Hitchin Herts (pronounced Hawts)** about 3 and after getting the boys dumped off had to go to Bedford & didn't get back until after five. The officers' quarters are reasonably comfortable. Very small mess – only three members – all seem very nice. Just finished playing 7 games of crib with one of the three – he beat me 4-3. He is almost as good as you are.

This is a very pleasant looking town. What worries me is that the men will like it so much that they will do a go -slow movement in the work and I will have to stay here longer than is necessary. However, I shall do all I can to prevent that happening.

Do you know this is the first letter I have written you since the 23rd of July. That should be grounds for divorce or something. I must admit I would rather talk to you in person than write you any time.

I drove miles in that wretched jeep today & I am somewhat weary tonight. However, I am informed that they don't rise here until 7.30 when one is awakened with a cup of tea. I hope that means that they serve it in a cup and not that they sluice it al over you as you lie in bed. I guess I will have to get used to it. It affords an encore for another few minutes in bed.

By the way there was another mouse in the traps this a.m. when I got back. That's a total score of four. Not bad, eh?

Please excuse the paper. It is a bit out of date I admit. But the choice was rather limited when I pulled out this morning.

That's about all for now, you D.S.G. I couldn't begin to tell you how much I miss you, so I won't try. I hope your throat isn't too sore, sweetheart, and that you are getting all the sympathy you so richly deserve.

All my love, darling.

Your loving husband,

Bill.

**Hertfordshire, a county 40 miles north of London

20th November 1945

Dear S.W.McB:

I have been thinking about your throat so much today that my own is sore just in sympathy. I hope that the dirty old tonsils are out O.K., that the patient survived the operation, and that your throat isn't too sore darling. I only wish I were there to have the pleasure of delivering to you a four hour lecture on deportment and behavior. For one, I should be able to do it without being interrupted by a series of Bronx cheers and rude remarks. This is probably the only chance I will ever have of doing it, and here I am nearly a hundred miles away. Nuts!

Last night the three members of this mess were entertaining their ex-O.C. and his wife and they sat up until about one o'clock. Out of pure courtesy I sat up too although I was in bed in spirit from about ten o'clock on. They take things very leisurely in the morning though. They roll in for breakfast about 9 o'clock. I was down looking for mine about 8.15. It consisted of shredded wheat and some ghastly kind of fish – kippers or something which I can't stand. Also tea was served instead of coffee. So by the time I left for work my morale was rather low. The other meals aren't bad though, but the men are complaining that they get charged 1d for tea at lunch time which sounds like a typical Limey trick. I hope it will be an inducement to them to work hard so we can get the hell out of here and back to Chiddingfold.

We got started taking down the huts today, but didn't get very far. We spent most of the afternoon making a scaffold. I doubt if we will be able to finish before the end of next week.

I hope that Bill Parsons will be up within the next couple of days and I can find out what the outcome of yesterday's meeting on the officer repat situation is. Then, if necessary, I can ask to be paraded.

Today's mail consisted of a letter from Marian deWitt (Ferguson) from Shawinigan Falls who has been in Toronto with her husband for a few days and had dinner with my poor old mother. I am enclosing the letter herein.

Also in the mail today was a letter from the B.I.R.D. enclosing a receipt for the cheque I sent them about six weeks ago. Fast work, eh!

Well, sweetheart darling, that is all the news for tonight. I have found that I miss you so much that I have reached a momentous decision, you lucky girl. I am going to take you back to Canada with me and keep you for a while. Isn't that wonderful?

Goodnight, Dog Sugar George. Be a good girl and keep your toenails well pared.

Your loving husband,

Bill