

P.S. Please excuse
Paraffin Oil on this page!
Frank.

27th Field Ambulance,

c/o Base Postal Depot,

Bombay,

Monday, August
11th.

My dearest Eileen,

I am still in Malaya with the same Field Ambulance but as you already know I had orders to move last night - I mean the orders came last night! I have been transferred to another Field Ambulance which is stationed 400 miles from here so now I have to retrace my steps all the way back again through Malaya to a place near my "heaven" in the hills (last station). If I had remained in this unit under the circumstances I should have gone mad (or may be you think I am quite crazy already?). Even though I have been ordered by the powers above to move forthwith my O.C. will not allow me to go until he has made many protests about changing me. He has been busy to stay interesting with "grass-hats" to allow me to stay put, but I know he is powerless to prevent the move. I know quite a lot about my new field ambulance because it was only 50 miles away from our last station; I don't know yet whether I shall remain a major or not but the prospects are good. Do you know that you are my only reason for wanting to remain a major? My darling, a most awful thing has just happened - my O.C. has just come to inform me that my move has been cancelled; a telegram came a few minutes ago! Oh Eileen it is such a disappointment in a way, and yet I did not want to leave my men - I do love them all and I want to stay with them and see that they get a square deal. Do you know that when the news leaked out today that I was moving, many of the men went to the O.C. and asked to be transferred to my new station; they are very loyal to me.

I have had another swim in the China Sea today and it was more wonderful than ever. You see I was allowed to wander around just as I pleased today because I was under orders to leave the limit. I always think of Bendoran when I go sea bathing. I cannot imagine why you went there for a day to see the Golf Champion Ghips and came away without having a swim! You will never find me doing such a foolish thing!! I am glad that you are taking up tennis again because when I ~~get~~^{reach} home again I intend beating you at tennis, Golf, fishing, cycling, and ludo!

Now young woman, listen to me - I love you and I shall always love you. I think of you all the day long, and it makes me so very happy to think of you. You have given me more happiness during these past few months than I ever dreamed could exist on this earth. I treasure every little sentence and word of your letters because they mean all the world to me. I pray now as I have never prayed before and I ask God to bless our love and our marriage when it takes place. Do you know that our home will be the happiest home on earth because we shall have everything, please God, that can bring happiness? We were meant to love each other always and we were meant for each other. All this awful separation can only strengthen our love and make it truer than ever before. Even my dearest I want to write to your mother - do you think I should? I want her to be my mother now. I know that I shall love her and all of your family. Now I pray for the day when we shall meet again and you will introduce me to the family. Oh my dearest what a homecoming that will be and what joy we shall know. I have often tried to imagine how I shall feel as my ship speeds on its way homeward bound. Even I could not live without your love. So please love me always; I could not live unless I was loving you with all my heart and soul.

Good night, my dearest, and God bless you (I have a chill to night).

Tuesday - August 12th - They say that 'growing' starts today, Eileen, but do not expect any growing from me because I have done my share of it already in this letter! How I do love you every day of my life and how I am living for the day when we shall meet again and have a home of our own. Have you told the little Frances that no matter how happy she and her Roland may be, we are much happier with our love! If she should dissent, just tell her that facts are facts! No two people in this world could ever love each other as much as we do my dearest, it's not possible, is it? Any starting, have you made up your mind yet as to what kind of wedding you would like and where you would like to have it? Would you like to be married in a vast cathedral, with a big crowd of people, and the mighty organ thundering out the wedding march? Or would you prefer a simple wedding in a quiet country chapel, with just our dear ones around us, and a very squeaky harmonium bleating out the notes of Here Comes the Bride? Oh my Eileen I dream of that day and I know how happy we shall be. It will be like starting a new life all over again but it will be more wonderful than before because each of us will have someone always near to share everything with - our joys and our sorrows. Besides being so much in love we shall be the good companions and very dear friends. Eileen, don't you think that God has given us everything in life and I know that we shall always be grateful to Him. He has given us true love and you know that the essence of this love is its unselfishness; you know that everything I have is yours without the asking and I am ashamed of the little that I can give you. You have all my love, all of my heart, and all of me, and there is not much more that I can say at your feet.

The Straits Times Press informed me yesterday that they had despatched to Miss Eileen O'Hane, Spring Villa, a copy of their 1961 Annual!

So my dearest you will have some interesting reading when it arrives - the pictures are really good. I have been very disappointed at the non arrival of the prints of 6 rolls of film from my photo dealers. They declare that they sent them at the end of last month and now 2 weeks later they have not come. There were some Grand Rapids among this lot, all meant for you (that's why I am furious about it!). I had a hard days work today in the field under the palms. When the work was all over there was a wild rush for the sea. About 90% of the men had never been in the sea before and they were thrilled with the waves and the sand, they were like a lot of happy children on the beach. I know they will write home to the Punjab (all are Punjabis) and tell of the wonders of the sea. Maybe they will tell how their Major Sahib swam away out into the ocean and came back with a very painful arm having been bitten by a monster of the deep! Yes, Eileen, a jelly-fish took a liking to my arm today when I was $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the shore and gave me something to think about! Whenever thank God the pain has gone and I can almost write legibly (or do I ever write legibly?). I had a bad sting in Bunderan (Rozey) in 1934. By the way Eileen, did you know that I had a swim in Galway Bay one cold December's morn when there was much ice on the ground? I spend my time boasting to you of my deeds of valour(?)! ~~the~~

There have been no more telegrams about my transfer as yet but it must come soon. I have had a happy day, because it always begins and ends with thoughts of you. I say my three Hail Hymns to Our Lady of Oints each morning. I wish I could tell, ^{you} of all the happy children's faces I have seen today. I was passing through a Malay village today in my truck - my driver was driving - when suddenly the wheels sank in the soft sand. You see the main street has a

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Nothing but soft sand on it because the village is built on sand. Anyhow we spent a good hour digging the truck out; we were ably assisted by all the small boys of the village encouraged by the shy mothers who sat on their door steps holding very beautiful children close to them. I thought to myself is there anything to compare with the innocence and beauty of children. These children were so utterly unspoiled or modernised; they were so natural and so gay. It is such a treat away in the wilderness to see a child - a smiling face and a pair of lovely dark brown eyes. Need I tell you that I love children and everything about them.

Good night and God bless you, Helen.

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 13th. Another telegram from you today, my dearest telling me of your visit to Beechwood and meeting my father. Why do you spoil me so much with all this attention - I am not used to it all yet and I do not deserve a love like yours. I want to hear about your momentous visit to my home in Belfast, whether you liked my father or not, what you think of Philip and Anne, and what you think of poor neglected Beechwood? Why could I not be at home and bring you to my home to meet all my people; instead poor Helen had to go alone and meet them. You need not tell me that all the windows were blasted in blowing an air raid, that slates came off, and spouts came down - I know all about it and it was only this very night that I came to know it! Poor old Blifflonville so very far from any military objective.

You mentioned that you wish to purchase the ring yourself. It is not quite orthodox that you should buy an engagement ring, my darling, but if you wish it then this unorthodox method must be employed. However I consent only on very special conditions and with great reluctance. I want you to have the ring of your choice as soon as possible and the quickest way of course would be for you to

buy it immediately. However that ring must come from me and it is understood that I shall pay for it. You must find out the cost of the ring and let me know; then I can send the money to you immediately; also let me know if you wish the money to be paid to your Banking account (address?) or to yourself. Listen, I want your advice on some money matters. Should I continue to send money to my father at home? You see Helen now that you and I are engaged I should be saving up some money for you and our future. Somehow I think my father would understand. Should I open an account with a Belfast Bank or keep my few dollars in Malaya; you and I should have a joint account at home but I suppose that is against all the laws of convention! I don't like the subject of money so please let us leave it severely alone; and yet it is not fair to you if I should neglect it entirely.

I had a very pathetic letter from my father this evening.

He is entirely innocent of all censures and described in detail where all the local wounds fell! The Catholic Churches seem to have escaped fairly well. Father said they were the worst three nights of his whole life and I am sure everyone in Belfast could say the same. Thank God, Helen, you did not have to come through that awful ordeal. I am very proud of my father just as you are of your Maudie; he is so very good and strong - many people have expressed the wish that I might be half as good a man as he. However he needs some understanding and I am the sole member of the family who understood him - the others thought him to be a very hard man, and he is not, really. I know how much he will love you, Helen, and appreciate anything about you. Has he arranged for you to meet the other two nuns at Cummin Road yet? You will like Maureen and Margaret too; Maureen so serious and nun-like and

Margaret quite the opposite! I was very annoyed to hear that Anne went off to Inasparafelt and left father alone at Beechwood - he had to cook his own breakfast. I know so well that the poor child works very hard but it is her job to stick by father and never leave him. I can tell you all about this now that you are one of the family but why should I burden you with more trouble? Did you really have a glorious stay at Beechwood, Cateen? I hope you did not peep into the family album and see me dressed in pellicots! Many, many day dreams I have had during my student days in my study at Beechwood - dreams of you, Cateen, and of our future.

Your telegram just came in time because I had a long letter sealed and stamped ready to go to Hoppin & Hobbs of Bondury asking them to send you a catalogue and some diamond rings from their London branch so that you could make your choice. I sent you a wire agreeing to your idea of purchasing the ring. My darling, it appears that there are pythons at the bottom of our garden here! I got a grand snap of one yesterday. I have also discovered that it is dangerous to stand in one position more than one minute here, else ones legs are apt to be devoured by hordes of red ants! What a country!!

Good night and God bless you my dearest.

THURSDAY AUGUST 14TH : I had a pleasant surprise today when a letter arrived from Frances. It came by sea mail and was on the high seas since May 27th - she was anxious to know when it would reach me. Here were the first congratulations received on our engagement. I think she knows how lucky I am in becoming engaged to you, Cateen. You could tell the little Fanny that I shall reply in the very near future. I wrote to my father today and asked him all about your visit to Beechwood and whether he liked you or not etc.

I had a grand route march early this morning with the men. It was our first march in this our new station and it was not so pleasant - every garment soaked with perspiration. Yet throughout there was no sun in the sky, it was the humidity that did the damage. I had some consolation in noting that the natives also perspire profusely, but we poor whites were never meant to live near mangrove swamps 7° N. of the Equator! Thanks heaven to morrow has been declared a general holiday in camp as it is the Hindu Christmas Day! There will be much feasting, singing, and beating of tom-toms, but what I want is some rest away from the whole show. I have worked hard in Malaya and every officer in the Field Ambulance has had leave except yours truly - I was a fool not to have some while it was possible.

My own darling, should this have to be my last letter to you let me put all my heart inside it and send it to you. You know that I love you, Helen, more tonight than ever in my life before. You always come first with me - in my thoughts and dreams and prayers; I have given you my life and myself but I feel that that is not enough I want to keep on giving you more. Do I give you any real idea of how much I love you by writing to you about it? To make you really understand I feel that I must talk to you about it - and may be I shall very soon. I may go out into the fields very soon but no matter where I may be I shall be loving you every minute of my life. I have a notion that my letters to you are now numbered, so I must write each as if it were the last one. My love for you can never die, my dearest, it cannot even die with me. But I am going to live through everything and come to you when the war is over with my love and myself. I shall always be with you even though I am far away in actual distance. Remember that there arms are ever around you -

to protect you always - and they are very strong arms and will never let you down!

There is a terrific thunderstorm raging outside just now (10.20.07) and the sky is lit up with the flashes of lightning. Rain and thunder all mean that there will be little sleep to night. God bless you, my dearest.

FRIDAY AUGUST 15th - I did not forget to pray for you in a special way

today to Our Lady; it is one of the glorious feasts and I asked Her to bless and love and keep it always as perfect as it now is. This was a general holiday in camp today because

of some Hindu 'saint's' birthday. As I watched all the celebration, I thought how wonderful it would be if only they were celebrating the Feast of the Assumption instead - if only

they could know about the Mother of God, surely they would forget about their mythical gods and 'saints'. How much happier they would be if they could change to our way

of adoring God instead of following the empty creed of Hinduism. This evening all the officers attended the festivities in the lines. We were allowed to go inside their

imprisoned temple and see what was going on. All these men were seated on the floor facing the altar on which reposed many pictures of the gods of Hinduism; a few

apples and oranges were placed before the pictures - these were gifts to the gods! It reminded me of the Harvest Thanksgiving in Belfast Churches!! Well, to continue my

story - the select few were seated right in front of the altar; one wise old lay was chanting aloud passages from the Hindu Scriptures; another played a portable

melodion(?), while a third played the Tom-Tom with great skill - later on a Tambourine was introduced! All newcomers, including the Hindu officers, all went

straight up to the altar, knelt down, and prostrated themselves in prayer before the pictures.

Having seen all this we were ushered outside to a small mosque near to the temple. We were given Lemnate and fruit as much as we could take.

Meanwhile a tall dark bearded man had burst forth into song from within the temple accompanied by music and tom-toms; men walked up and down ceaselessly waving large fans in us and everyone around. All were happy even the Moslems who turned up in full force at the feast! We all left them to it at 8 p.m. but the celebration will not end till 1 a.m. when they will eat a terrific meal (and feel bad to-morrow). My dearest, I have wasted all these precious lines telling you of a very ordinary thing, when there are so many other things to talk about.

I wanted to ask you if you had made any plans to visit Dublin in the near future again and if so have you arranged to meet them at Lion Hill? Have you been invited back to Beechwood again or have they decided not to invite you again! Cannot you, Eileen, shake them up a bit and make them keep Beechwood decently and not allow it to rot away into disrepair. Surely it is worth while keeping it properly. It reminds me of Spring Villa in away, but how I wish I had been often in your home. With great reluctance I was dragged in once by Felix. My darling, I got queer palpitations as I walked up the path and when I entered the house I felt as if I had entered a holy place. Every little thing about you, Eileen, was so very sacred to me and always will be. I shall always love you in this way and nothing can ever change my love for you. I can never give you enough love no matter how much I may give you. I have noticed by your telegrams that you have spent the early part of this month in Belfast. Does this mean that you did not succeed in getting a house at Killough this season and does it mean that for the first time in many years the O'Hane family did not all meet at Killough? I am sorry, Eileen, if all your plans for the summer have gone awry. However cheer up and think of poor me with no holiday at all

for our two eyes! Still I hope you had a grand reunion with all your dear ones. The Jennings family never have reunions, there are too many in Cornwall!

Good night, Eileen, and God bless you. (What do I love you so much??)

SATURDAY. AUGUST 16th - Let me tell you a big secret, my darling. I have felt fit today for the first time since I arrived at this new station (about two weeks ago). Thank God I now feel ready for the fray again and I got some real work done at last today. The others spent the day in the field but my company stayed at home and made themselves useful. I am still with my unit and have not been demoted yet! I am anticipating a move to some other unit in the near future, no false alarm already. I said at the beginning of this letter that I should go mad if I remained here, but that was very wrong because now I know that I could stay and keep quite sane! My men are grand chaps and I love them all - I don't want to leave them.

This has been my very worst letter to you ever, but I was not feeling too good all throughout this week. I am sorry, Eileen, if it makes such awful reading. I have been thinking about your photograph today and wondering when it will reach Malaya - it can never come quickly enough. I want to see you every time I enter and leave this wooden hut. I am very happy seeing you now in your snap - trophies and golf clubs - and you occupy a very central position in my room. Do you know that you have always occupied a very central position in my heart - you occupied it all so very long ago. Nothing can ever displace you from your place there. The war may seem endless and the waiting may seem almost eternal, but Eileen, we shall surely meet again and be the happiest pair in all the world. I shall do everything to make you so very happy, but you do not have to try to make me happy because I shall always be so as long as I have you

love. I am many thousands of miles away from you, my dearest, but the very thought that you love me can bring me untold joy. I have so much to tell you when we meet again; so many plans to make with you; so many things to do; so much love to give you to atone for all the love I should have given you many years ago. You know that I shall love you forever, Helen, and that I shall always be yours. To all your dear ones at home I send my love and they ever have my prayers for their safety.

Oh, my darling, I never knew that I could love you so much. I do not want to leave you now; I shall never want to leave you because I love you so. I pray that God will bless us and our love and may He bring us together soon again. May He and His Blessed Mother protect you and keep you from all dangers.

All my love,

Ever and ever yours,

Frank.

P.S. I love you!

The stamps do not mean that
I am still in Serbia!