

24th Field Ambulance,

Malaya,

Monday, December 8th

Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

My own Darling Eileen,

This morning I had a message from our advanced Dressing Station and it said "War declared; naval bombardment; coastal landing by enemy." I could scarcely believe my eyes. It seemed a sacrilege that war should begin on this Great Feast of Mary Our Mother.

This has been an awful day for me at the Train Dressing Station here.

Already I have given my blood to an R.A.F. Sergeant and oh I was so proud to do this for such a man. He shot down a Japanese fighter into the sea before leaving his targets below and brought his plane safely back. The other casualties were minor ones, and were

~~the~~ I have been happy today because at last I am doing something worth while. I thought of you all day and my only concern was that you might be worried about me and my safety. I wanted to tell you "Do not worry, my darling; all will be well." I have never loved you as much as I do today and I have never prayed so hard. I shall always love you, Eileen.

This morning I put your little photo snap inside an empty cigarette case with your lock of hair; your medal around my neck - and thus armed I went off to the war. I have opened that little case so often today and I have prayed each time for you and loved you more. This is the first page of the letter which I am keeping for you Eileen; we shall read it together when the war is over and we meet again. Good night and God bless you my darling child.

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9TH :- My darling, today the second of the war in the Far East. We were bombed and machine-gunned by Japanese bombers this morning for hours. This was my first air raid and strangely enough I was not afraid in the least; I carried my sergeant pilot on a stretcher into a trench with the other patients. There we were for ages looking up at those huge planes, first in formation at 10000 feet and then just above the trees tops when they machine-gunned our hospital. I did not forget you for a moment during that raid; neither did I forget to pray to Our Lady of Aurore. Your medal, your snaf, and your lock of hair were all close to my heart - so I must have been safe. It annoyed me very much when I was ordered to have my sergeant behind in bed during the third raid alarm; he did want to come with us so I remained with him and kept him talking the whole time. After all the bombing and machine-gunning there was only one slight casualty in the whole place.

My friend the Irish doctor has joined us here and is doing great work in the operation theatre. He is a very cheery soul and oh so very good to the patients. The Japanese have not landed here as yet but have confined their activity mostly to Kota Bharu - as announced on the radio today. We still hold the aerodrome up there and the Indian troops are fighting very well. I must have some sleep now while there is time!

God bless you, Lesley.

Wednesday, December 10th - My own darling, I have been out of camp for a few hours today in a lorry and managed to get stretched to the skin! It was grand to get out in the open again and to feel the rain beating in my face and have fresh air around me. I did not even trouble to look up into the sky and look for enemy planes - I was happy. It was rather pathetic to see the refugees streaming along

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the road - to menhane - Chinese, Tamils, Malays. Women clasping small babies to their breast, with a bundle in the other arm and a sad look on their pale frightened faces (especially the Chinese). These peaceful people are now in the thick of the war; now they realise what China has endured at the hands of the Japs.

The men are used to air raids now and think nothing of them at all. Some bombs were dropped today but no damage was done and we had no casualties. My little sergeant was evacuated today and though I was sorry to lose him, he will be much better off at a base hospital. I am on duty by the phone in the office tonight and I am wondering what your thoughts are just now. My darling, do not worry about me; I shall be alright. Remember that the only real harm that can come to me is that I should lose God's friendship; nothing can harm me while I have that to guide me. I want to send you a telegram but have not a moment to spare, and it's very doubtful if telegrams are being despatched ~~too~~ nowadays. You know that I love you with everything I have got and that I shall always love you. Good night, my dearest, and may God bless and console you this night.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 11th - My darling, can you forgive me for the awful letter I am writing to you now. I only have a few moments to spare at night and when these moments come I am too tired to do anything; you may even think my writing quite good when I tell you that it has been written in almost complete darkness due to the black-out. I could never have carried on without your love, Eileen, and your prayers and now I know that no matter how long the war in Malaya may last I shall carry on through it all and in the end come back safely to you. During the past three days I have loved you more than I thought it was possible to love anyone on this earth. No matter what may happen to me I know that I shall always love you; nothing can ever change me or my love. My darling, I do not want you to suffer and that

is why nothing will happen to me. I am no coward, Ellen, and for myself I care nothing but it is you I am always thinking of and wondering how things will affect you whom I love so much. I would rather die a thousand times than have you suffer in any way. I know you will find comfort and consolation in prayer. He has said "Come to me, all ye..." and I know that you will go to Him for solace and He will not fail you.

I sent you a Pan-American letter on the 8th December but it will not travel by "Clippers" as this service has ceased to function. The ordinary air mail has also ceased and nothing remains except sea mail and this will be slow and uncertain nowadays. I hope and pray that my farewell letter to you on the 1st December did not upset you, my dearest one. I think it must have got through to America in good time. I wanted you to have that letter more than anything else. Alas I have gone to war without knowing whether or not you received the ring or not. Oh why did they not send it before all this started; I would have felt so much happier; they will probably cancel the whole thing now. Thank God your Christmas card and presents were sent in good time and should have reached you by this time. I let us pretend that one candle stick is you and one is me; then we shall be together always on your mantelpiece! The flame of our love will never be extinguished - we shall always love each other no matter where we may be. I shall spend Christmas with you in spirit and I know that it will be a happy one for us both. Ellen, my darling, we have got everything that two people could ask for; we have got true love and a holy love and we have had a wonderful year of happiness even though parted by many thousands of miles. Think of the years that lie ahead of us and the joy that will surely be ours. We place all our trust in Him who knows all things and

Who created all things. His way is the best way and we shall always do His Holy will.

I have been a doctor today at last! I have practised my art and I have eased pain and given some joy to others. I have a kind of running "belfry" in my Dispensary and hot tea is served to every patient - and their escorts! If you could have seen the dusky face that appeared out of the darkness just now and asked me for some Holy Water you would have smiled. It was my old Kamida (who is a Catholic) and I gave him half of my Stone - he was so pleased to have it. Nothing much happened today except that I bled you more than ever.

Good night my darling and God bless you.

FRIDAY December 12th Today I had to abandon my role of doctor and become a lorry driver for a few hours this afternoon! I had a glorious time driving through blinding rain to draw supplies at the depot; I think I must have missed my vocation - I should have been a lorry driver. It is rather precarious driving along these narrow roads, especially when another lorry looms large ahead of one. My only worry was that the blenching rain would penetrate my cigarette case and destroy its priceless contents; but all was well and you escaped the shower! I must have looked a sorry sight on my return to camp with all my clothes sodden and rain dripping from my nose!

There was not much work today and it was good to relax for a whole day - not even an air raid to break the peace of our home in the rubber. There is not much news of the Far Eastern war today and though Japan has started off in real "blitz" fashion, she will have to slow up a bit now. Then one of these days she will be struck by the might of America and the war will be over in this part of the world. Japan will have small temporary success but she cannot hope to survive when Britain, America, China, and the East Indies get together.

My own darling, you must not be sad or think that I am pessimistic about the future. I have placed myself in God's hands and I know that He will bring me back safely to you but it may be His holy Will that I should never return to you and we cannot ignore this possibility. Should anything happen to me, Lileen, always remember that our love can never die and that we shall meet again in heaven please God - He will allow us to love each other then too. I shall always need your love no matter where I may be and you will always have mine; I have always wanted you, Lileen, and your love ever since I first saw you. Do not be sad for me if anything happens - I want you to be happy. God forbid that anything should happen to you, my own darling, but if it should then I would not become despondent and utterly miserable - I would go on loving you in the same way and pray for you; and yet all the time I would know that you were loving me and praying for me even though you were in heaven. I would never marry anyone if I could not marry you, Lileen. But you must not think the reverse to be true - should I die then you must not be bound to me; if any other good man can make you happy then I would be pleased indeed. It would break my heart to think that you were ever miserable. My own darling, I am sorry to write in this strain to you; I have put it very badly, but you may be able to understand how I feel on this subject.

I want you to be cheerful and be your normal self at home and at school, among your dear ones and among your friends. It is natural that you should worry but please do not let them see that you are worried. God is sending you a greater cross than me - the war in Malaya is my job but it cannot hurt me; my only worry is that this war might hurt you. It is my life's ambition never to have you hurt even in the smallest thing and yet here I am causing you more

more than I am worth. I cannot understand why you ever loved me at all. It was so natural that I should have loved you because you were everything that was good and you were a very lovable person. Do you remember how simple and innocent our love was at first? How could anyone ever think that it was wicked. Thank God it has remained pure and holy, as it always shall be. My darling, how perfect our marriage will be with such a love to keep us together; our home will be heaven on earth because we shall have everything to make it so.

I know you will visit Beechwood often and see my dear ones there. They all love you, Helen; father loves you more than his own children and Anne has made you her sister, Margaret, Una, and Maudie will treat you in the same way. Don't you think Margaret has great character; she is a wonderful "prayer" and resembles my father in many ways. Do not let them worry about me; do not let your Mamma or Daddie worry either, because all will be well. Please God, I am getting in as much as I can in to night's diary because to-morrow night I shall be on duty and sleeping in the office and I may not have time to write much. I promise to write every day even though only a few lines.

God bless you, my own dearest one, and may He keep you safe.

SATURDAY - DECEMBER 13th - How very unlike a Saturday it has been to day. I have been in camp all day and it was not exciting - even when some planes came and dropped their loads; no damage was done. The poor Japs are incredibly bad shots but of course this country gives little chance of accuracy in bombing. As I sat in the trench to day and looked up at the planes overhead, I felt so very unafraid and so very cool; somehow I had new courage and I was happy too. Is it unnatural to be happy during air raids? I knew that you were the cause of my happiness - your love and your prayers and thoughts give me such wonderful strength and confidence.

War conditions here for me are exactly the same as peace time conditions. All my "acts" are very useful to me now, because I have no desire to go to pictures and so I do not miss them. Cigarettes will soon be scarce, but I shall not miss them at all. There is only one thing I cannot live without and that is your love, Eileen; I must always have that. You see how good God has been to me in every way; He has given me happiness and peace of mind even under my present conditions here. Everyone is cheerful and optimistic in camp here; naturally the men were frightened during the first air raid but since then they have been unwellness. There are so many things I should like to tell you about in my diary but they must wait till we meet again - they cannot be written in a letter. However the censor does not object to me telling you that I love you with my whole heart and soul, that I have never loved anyone but you, Eileen, and never shall.

God bless you this night and may angels guard thee.

SUNDAY - DECEMBER 14th :- My own darling, I am in the office to night and all is well. Did you know that I loved you so much? After loving you for so many years I now find that my love has grown beyond all knowledge. You are a terrible girl for waiting so long to tell me that you loved me! but how I thank God that you have told me all about it. During the past year I have felt so happy that I should have cried with sheer joy at times when I thought of you and the love you have given me. Your love has always been the most precious thing on earth and now that it has come, I realize that it means everything to me; somehow a war seems a very small thing indeed, when I think of all that you have given to me. My heart is broken just now in case you are in the least worried about me. We, two Eileens, have so much to live for; we have so many grand things to do in life that our lives could never be long enough. You must never be sad, my dearest one, no matter what happens to me - I shall always be loving you in the same



way. I know that I shall never be able to love you enough no matter how long I may live, but I do know that I shall love you more and more every day of my life. Our death cannot separate us, we shall love each other forever and ever. If I should be the cause of much suffering to you, then you will know that I could not have avoided it. We have loved much and had much happiness, but also great love has brought great pain at times; I shall never regret having loved you so much, Eileen. I have always wanted you to have all of me and all my love; I would never have been happy unless you had all. There are eventful days in our lives, Eileen, but our prayers and our love will pull us through all right; and when this war is over our love will be stronger and purer than ever before. I have got peace and contentment that so few amongst me seem to have; life can never be again to me again. I feel so happy when I get up each morning and greet the dawn at 6.30 a.m.; I say good morning to you and then come my prayers with a very fervent morning offering to our dear Lord and a prayer for you and my dear ones and yours too. And when night comes after a peaceful day I bid thee "Good-night" and put you softly under my pillow. Eileen you do look lovely in that little snap - it will never leave me, please God, night or day, no matter what medal and your little lock of hair.

Today has been a strange Sunday because it is the first Sunday in my whole life that did not seem like a Sunday! I worked hard all day and did some little bit of doctoring. Last night I doled out some more Holy Water and oh how happy that little Ephraim lad was when he went off from my room with his small bottle. He is a nursing orderly (British) in the R.A.M.C. and he is a Grand Chap. The war is much as usual in Malaya and we are holding our own very well indeed. I must be off to my "hot" and sleep and dream; have to rise at 6 a.m. to tomorrow morning. I love you Eileen. Good night and God Bless you.

MONDAY DECEMBER 15th : - My darling, what is it like at home nowadays?  
 Are you very busy doing Christmas shopping in Omagh! May be you are on  
 holiday already and enjoying a rest after a hectic term at school; I know you will  
 have Christmas at Hillnagh. It will be so peaceful and quiet down by the sea  
 in Co. Down, an ideal setting for that Holy Season. It is a time of great joy  
 and I know that you will have a happy time because I want you always to be  
 happy. I never want to cause you a moment's unhappiness ever - I would  
 rather die than do that, even indirectly. Can you forgive me for ever coming into  
 your life, for allowing you and wanting you to fall in love with me, and now  
 when your love has reached its height I am causing you to suffer. Oh my own  
 dearest, if I could only do something to prevent your suffering - what wouldn't  
 I do, what wouldn't I give. I am not in danger, Eileen, and you must know  
 this too well. I am a doctor attending the wounded during a war and am  
 not in the fighting line, much as I would like to be. I can do so much good  
 in my present job and you must think only of this; everything that I shall do  
 I shall imagine that you are always present to help me - then my job will  
 be well done. And if you were really present in person you would never be ashamed  
 of me because I put my best into everything.

Do you remember I told you in a recent letter that rather than  
 have a row with anyone I always walked away - but today was an exception and I  
 had a battle royal. I did not lose my temper though my adversary completely lost his!  
 I stood up and fought and won because all my principles were at stake; it did not  
 matter to me whether my opponent was a senior officer to me. I am glad now that I had  
 this row because it would have shown awful weakness in my part and besides, it  
 had a happy ending because the other man and I were in speaking terms a few

moments later! My darling, you see I must have a row sometimes especially when it concerns something which a Catholic holds dearest in life. You would have hated me if I had not "fought" today. It was a great moral victory for me and I am very elated about it. I was asked to do something by a senior officer which would have been against all that you and I have been taught to love and I refused! Then the battle began and soon ended! My own darling, I do love you so very very much tonight and I shall always love you. God bless you and keep you this night.

TUESDAY - DECEMBER 16th - Kileen my dearest, at last I have had a chance of sending you a telegram; it is all ready to be sent to the post office in the morning. Oh as I cannot send it to you myself and much as I hate others sending it for me it cannot be helped. However I have put it in an envelope, sealed it and addressed to the local postmaster. I am also sending one to my father lest he be worried about me. Maybe I have got a swelled head in thinking that anyone in this world would be worried about my safety; I know so well that I am not worth worrying about! In case my telegram goes astray, here it is for you now - "Do not worry; all is well; I shall always love you my darling; ever yours; Frank Murray". Now I hope and pray that this message has reached you safely already and that it will bring you some joy.

Another Air Mail has arrived from India today but not a word has come yet about the ring. I had a letter from my bank in Rawalpindi and they inform me that I have now 115 rupees credit (about £9!). However I have got over £100 in the Hongkong & Shanghai Bank at Ipoh and about £200 in Birmingham. I am sorry to mention money, darling, but it is best that you should know where my things are. I have five cases of stuff with Cox & Kings Ltd (Storage) at Rawalpindi; one trunk, one suit case, and one attache case here with me. If

Anything should happen to me, though please God it won't, then you can give these details to my father. All my plans for our joint banking account have now gone astray as I cannot send any money now that war has come to Malaya. My sun darling, I feel as if I had let you down about our ring and about the banking account but honestly, Eileen, I could not help it. Your plan will be the best in the end when the war is over - we shall select our ring together and I shall put it on the third finger of your left hand. That day will come so sure as sure! And then you will see how much I love you. It is of no use trying to explain all about my love for you, Eileen; we shall have to meet first and then you will hear it all from my own lips. Good night and God bless you my dearest one.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 16th - My sun darling, I am becoming more and more ashamed of this letter - it becomes worse as the end approaches. It is not easy writing under these conditions and so you must forgive a lot of things in my letters. Thank God you have some idea of my whereabouts and that you realize that the war has not actually reached me as yet. Your visit to Prof. Thomson was not in vain and the time you spent on that snap has been profitable to you. I told you that Humphrey had gone north some months ago and at the moment he is probably in the thick of the fighting but his unit is situated about 50 miles behind the front line. It is sad to think that my little home in the mountains is now in enemy hands - it almost seems criminal and unbecomingly that they should occupy such beauty. I have heard some details of the fighting up there and all concerned put up a grand show against terrific odds. The little san (office) of Inasorapelt origin was magnificent throughout and still is. I am sorry we were sent away from that pleasant place; I would love to have been in that battle, but I suppose my turn will come soon enough here.

When you write again, Celen, please tell me all about Belfast - Falls Road, Cliftonville; does Miss Still look down upon Spring Villa and does my Cave Hill still look very lovely and green? And is my cricket ground a lovely bowl of green; and are the leaves coming back to those stately trees around Beechwood and the Convent beyond? I suppose the little Chapel bell is silent nowadays and does not chime out the Angelus. Maybe I am a bit homesick, but then who wouldn't be, occasionally? I would dearly love to see our native city again, to ride in its trams and buses, to walk along its streets, to approach a villa on Springfield Road and peep through the garden gate (very rudely) to see if my beloved were in the garden in her blue dress. Would she welcome me back again and would she really throw her arms around my neck and tell me something that I have wanted to hear for many, many years? Do you think she would notice the tears of joy in my eyes or would her own eyes be too misty to see even that? Do you think she will know immediately how very much I love her; do you think she will find much change in me whom she used to know as a very self-conscious schoolboy? Would she mind terribly if I flew off to Beechwood with her to meet my father and my dear one; would she mind terribly if I went off with her to the highest peak of Cave Hill, and sat down in the heather beside her and just talked and talked to her alone as we looked down on Belfast below. I have so many things to tell her that she will be bewildered by it all; I wonder will she listen to my boring tale? Maybe she will have much more exciting things to tell me, but I too must have my say. You are a terrible girl to make me love you so much; Oh my darling I always wanted to love you so much as I do now; I have always loved you and only you. Now I hope and pray that my dream will come true and that we shall meet again. I want to see you just once more, Celen, and tell you something which

Should have been told before, but which you have always known. I want to meet your  
 Annette and Thaddeus and all those who are dear to you. Please God I shall meet  
 them all sooner than we expect at the moment. Think of the joy that will be ours;  
 think of the days and months and years of happiness that are ahead of us. Think of  
 the home that we have planned, think of all the little things that can make our home  
 perfect. Oh my Helen we have got everything that a human heart could desire; our  
 home will be a perfect one and you and I shall be the happiest couple the world  
 has ever seen. I am so proud to be engaged to you, so what will my friends in  
 you be like when we are married. No matter how long I may have to wait until  
 our next meeting you know that I shall be loving you more and more each  
 day of my life.

I pray that God may guide this letter on its perilous journey  
 to you in safety. I shall write to you daily, if it is only a single line. I shall  
 send you a cable when possible. I shall love you forever and ever, Helen, and nothing  
 will ever change my love for you. I have always belonged to you and always shall  
 be yours. May God bless you, my dearest one and may He keep you safe from  
 all harm; may many our Mother watch over you always and protect you from  
 danger.

Ever yours loving  
 Frank.

P.S. Love to Frances and all at home  
 Frank.