

27th Field Ambulance,

c/o Army Base Post Office,  
Singapore, S.S.,

Monday, December 1st.

My own dearest Eileen,

I sent off a very frantic 16 page letter this morning to my best girl and now I am sorry about all the things I put in it! It was frantic and I wrote frantic things in it because it was a sort of 'farewell' letter - I thought it would be the last one for many months to come; but I hope and pray that this will not be so. The Far Eastern situation became very bad recently and so all Malaya has been standing by; all officers were recalled from leave. Well, my darling, we are still standing by but the excitement of the sudden "get ready" order has died away and here I am as usual writing to you under very quiet and peaceful conditions in this little bungalow. It is raining hard but rain never worries or depresses me because I love it. I was so excited that I sent off the letter containing my small snap and forgot to write ~~on~~ something on the letter explaining my bandaged face of Kowloon! I did not forget to say Goodbye to you and all your dear ones. My darling, it was thoughtless of me to write such a gloomy letter to you, but as usual I just wrote as I felt. We did promise to be honest with each other and write down our feelings, our fears, our hopes and dreams; but that is no reason why I should suddenly unload all my woes upon your delicate (?) shoulders.

If I were to tell you of the one smiling event of today you would laugh - well, darling, I had sugar on my bread at tea time! However I did go to the village on business this morning to see the medical officer of a unit there. I was entertained regally with orange squash. I sent my Christmas telegrams off from the local P.O. - one to you

my beloved, me to Frances, and me to my father. It seems so cold writing down a few numbers on a telegram form and sending them off to people we love; but you know that my whole heart and soul is in every word that those numbers mean. I went to town in an Ambulance Car and it was like any other visit to town except that I wore a Red Cross Brassard on my arm! On my way I passed a native Kampong and saw Mrs. (Dr.) McWhan doling out advice and medicine to women and children gathered all around her. I would love to have her job among these kindly natives. I later saw the Doctor himself doing his rounds at the hospital and we hailed each other.

My dearest Eileen, I am still very happy and it is your love that makes me so happy. Thank God you are safe in far off Ireland and that there have been no air raids on our native land - it brings me great consolation in times like these. How thankful I am that you are not in Malaya now and married to me; it would kill me to think that I had brought you all the way out here and put you right in the middle of another war when you would be so utterly alone without Kith or kin to turn to. How infinitely better off you are in Omagh; you are in the best lap of your first town and Christmas is fast approaching. It is a grand feeling looking forward <sup>to</sup> and preparing for Christmas - especially in Ireland. My darling, will you promise me that on Christmas Eve of every year in our home, that you will light those two blessed candles in our candlesticks and place them by the windows for the Blessed Virgin to see. It is an awful thought to me that for the first time in my life I shall have to spend Christmas without brass. I cannot now have leave for a single day. Still I am praying that Father Girard will be able to come home on Sunday December 21st as promised. I sent a letter (official) to H.Q. about brass and compasses for all battalions within the area and they kindly circulated it to every unit, including the R.A.F., so that every Catholic soldier in the district now knows all about brass on 21st and they also know that the good news was sent to them

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by a very obscure Captain in the R.A.M.C.! My dearest, I always feel so proud being a Catholic and all that it stands for. You, in Ireland, have no idea how carefully others watch Catholics in Eastern countries; somehow they always expect a lot from us in the way of example. Others may go to the dogs in these countries, but never a Catholic!

I must away and have my bath and love you no more this night. God bless you,ileen.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 2nd. My darling, you must be prepared for very boring letters in the near future because I may be confined to camp for many months to come. At present I feel like a "bird in a gilded cage" surrounded by all these trees and no prospect of seeing daylight soon; worst of all not a chance in the world of having a swim in my China Sea! However stone walls do not a prison make . . . and so my spirit and my heart are many thousands of miles away with you and that is why I shall always be happier even though we are separated. How can I ever be sad again in my life while I have your love to sustain me and our prayers to guide me right. I want to share my happiness with others here and I do succeed in making many people in this camp happy. They just cannot understand why I should always be so gay; no matter what things may be like, no matter how boring life may seem in camp, I am always the same and in great form the whole day long. My own darling, you know that you are the cause of all this. (Interruption! Two hours debate with my neighbours on Russia, Germany, Spain, India, Turkey, Communism etc. etc!). It is now 8.15 P.M. and I have not changed for dinner yet, but I must tell you that I love you with my whole heart and soul and that I am yours forever and ever. Nothing can ever change me. I know that I shall come back to you and then our happiness will only have begun. Marriage is not a light undertaking, but with our love and our prayers we shall make it a success. My darling, you must never have any doubts about our Great Decision - we are sure that we have chosen rightly because we have chosen only after much prayer and trials. Our future happiness is assured because we have placed it

in the hands of our good God. Our love and our marriage will be under His protection and He will make our home like that home she had in Haywards. The aftermath of this awful war has no terrors for us because we shall, with God's help, pull through somehow; we have so much to live for in these days - there will be work to do but it will be in a good cause and we shall love it. We shall always be happy together no matter where we may be or what we may do. We are not building our future just on dreams, Lileen; we are preparing for it in real earnest. We are not depending on Refinement or Superficiality in love to bring us happiness - our love is deep and true and sincere; it has been tested during all these years and today, it has never been so strong. There are so very many things about our love and our future which I cannot write about in letters, but I feel that you understand all these things and that we agree about everything. We have so much to talk about when we meet again.

When you find that my letters are becoming too dull you must be honest about it and tell me. Thank God we can always be open with each other. All your letters have been received and the latest was your Grand birthday letter which came by Clippie. Your last ordinary letter was sent on September 15th. Did the box of snaps ever reach you, Lileen? And what about all the magazines I so generously sent you? My darling, it is my delight to be sending things to you; it will be my constant joy to give you my all during my life. My birthday will soon be here, but you have made it a very happy one by your letter, and snap and lock of hair, and brass etc. I read my horoscope today (which I don't believe in) in the papers and it seems that next year I shall have a removal, shall travel far, shall be married, shall be a great success in my profession etc; Venus is shining very bright for me!! Have you ever known such a marvellous year for me?? It seems that Venus is doing good work for you too on January 20th!! I must go now, Lileen. God bless you and keep you.

WEDNESDAY - DECEMBER 3rd

To day has not been so busy and I finished work at 4 P.M. - Yesterday it was 6 P.M. ! With the crisis comes a lot of bustling around, mostly in small circles. I have had a delightful job during the past two days of sketching the aeroplanes of all the local countries friend and foe - and colouring in their distinctive markings. I have worked with coloured pencils and chalks; you know how I loved geography for its maps and contours! We are still "standing by" in Malaya waiting for anything that may come. I have always much more to do than the others - in fact I am still doing all the jobs I was doing when a major (Company Commander, Q. Master etc.). I am like a father to the men as I have to feed and clothe them and that is no easy job when fighting begins as I shall then be a doctor and in charge of the main Dressing Station. In this we have operating theatres, all surgical instruments, dressings, sterilizers, anaesthetics etc as in a modern hospital. I have to organize the "whole show", keep an eye on everyone, operate, dress wounds, and give anaesthetics; in short, I have about a million jobs but please God I shall be able to manage them all. I love work and oh how I hate idleness; my work so far in the army has been anything but medical but it was grand to be doing something. I have suddenly remembered something! - Yesterday was my second Anniversary of joining the Army! I imagine two precious years of my life have gone - whether I know not; the first year was the saddest of my life and the second one has been the happiest. I shall never be unhappy again in my life - that can only come when you are hurt by anyone. Now I wish that for the rest of our lives that I could bear all your hurts and troubles; you have promised to share them with me and I shall feel very annoyed if you do not keep that promise. You must never give the excuse that it will worry me when you confide your troubles in me - we are partners, and partners always share things.

As I sit in the mess writing to you I have been keeping one eye on a certain path because a post was due today. And now I have seen a familiar figure coming down that path and he is carrying a bundle of letters for the officers! Yes! there is a letter for

one, but slack! it is from my bank!! Still, it was grand fun sitting here in expectation of a letter from you, my darling. Our mess is a low wooden building, thatched roof, very long, twenty large windows and 6 doors - these latter are always open! One never dreams of shutting a window or door no matter what the weather may be like; it would become very hot inside. I cannot imagine myself back in civilization again where doors are shut and windows boarded, the latter custom is city-bred!

This afternoon I was introduced to the Maharajah of Jorhwal (a state in the hills of the Punjab). He seemed a very ordinary sort of chap, fat, short of breath, and very pleasant looking. I tried to visualize him robed in his regal outfit and holding court at his luxurious place in India surrounded by his councillors and lovely ladies; but I failed hopelessly. The surroundings of this camp did not encourage my flight of imagination - a poor background for this Prince who is entitled to a salute of 17 guns! To morrow morning I have been detailed to go to the village and inspect the medical equipment of a regiment there. I am looking forward to this so it will mean a few hours out of camp; in fact it will be exciting as I shall have my automatic in my pocket. Now my darling, don't you think that I am very safe now carrying such a weapon; it is really only a toy in comparison with a service pistol. It is essential (and ordered) that one should be armed in these days of unrest.

I am very worried about Josephine, your sister since I heard the news at lunch time on the radio. My darling, surely that child will not be conscripted under this new order; it would be awful and I hope and pray that she will be exempted. I think that teaching is a secured occupation. Thank God you have been spared all of this in Ireland; it would break my heart to think of you doing a man's work - it is all so unwomanly and unnatural. The mess has been invaded by three officers and the radio is in full blast - and the news is not so good about Libya. The Germans are being driven back from

Rosario, but the war seems to drag on and on. I am still optimistic about a speedy end to it all and still have confidence in Pope Pius's prophecy. Now I love to think of what the end of the war will mean to us and the happiness it will bring to us.

To-morrow is my big day and I shall spend it entirely with you - in thought and in prayer. Alas I am the Society Officer to-morrow - a special present! I wonder what my dear mother will think of her son to-morrow? She must be happy now that she has brought us together again; Celen we shall never forget her in our prayers for a single day of our lives, we owe so much to her. I know she will be pleased with the Mass that I have given to her and which will be offered up to-morrow morning in Kuala Lumpur by my little Frenchman - Father Girard. I have been thinking about our family Rosary, Celen, and how faithful we shall be to it, we shall have a tremendous number of "trimmings" to say after it each night - so many intentions to pray for, so many things to thank God for, so many relatives and friends to be remembered daily. (My mother called all these things the "trimmings" of the Rosary!). She used chide father a lot (in fun) for the huge number of "blesses" he said after the family Rosary! I had a grand view of them all from the "back row" - father so devout, mother so lady, Jose so innocent, Anne fast asleep, Philip half-asleep and never a word, Lawrence so serious, Margaret so genuine, and Anna so firm, and poor Frank so stolid! And now you have the whole family except Charlie - he was so quiet and so patient and good as he lay on his couch; he would smile when he heard Anne's heavy breathing and laugh outright when Philip would say 12 "Hail Marys" instead of 10, thereby incurring a stern rebuke from father!

Good night my darling and may God bless you.

THURSDAY - DECEMBER 4th - 7.30 a.m. Good morning my own dearest one! It is my birthday and then you are fast asleep (12.30 am in Dwyer) in bed. I feel so happy and gay and want to tell you all about it. I have begun my birthday with you and that's

Why I am happy; I have never been nearer to your heart than this morning. I am growing  
old in years - 29! - but thank God my love is growing with me and I feel younger in  
heart than ever before in my life. I shall write to you a lunch time when I return from the  
village. [2 P.M.] Had a glorious drive to town and back through the rain; everything so  
fresh and cool. And all the time I know it was my birthday and my heart was singing; I  
was thinking of you always. How your sleepy head you are only crawling out of bed at this  
unearthly hour of the day; may be you are on your way to my brass - your special present  
to me on my birthday. Oh my Lileen I do love you so very much. [4.30 P.M.] I have just  
realized properly that in one way my birthday is the same as any other day in that I  
am always thinking of you. This is my third note to you today and there is more  
to come, but I should be doing this every day of my life. However my letters are  
quite disappointed enough without sending you four instalments daily instead of one!  
I have actually examined two cases (patients) this afternoon and I feel quite a doctor  
again! However I must be off now to mount the Guard!

[6 P.M.] It is now evening and your wish has come true - it has been  
a very very happy birthday, Lileen. I did not think there could be such happiness in this  
world as I have known to day, especially this evening. I have felt that you were close to  
me and with me in spirit; I have even felt your prayers. You and I depend so much  
on prayer for everything and we shall never change; our love and our happiness all depend  
upon prayer. Please God we shall never have a single unhappy moment in our married  
life together; and it is in these days of separation that we are one making sense of this by  
praying with all our might. We are loving each other more and more as the days pass by  
and we need this stone of love to carry us through a lifetime together. I have always loved  
you, my dearest one, but my part love seems so small compared with the love that  
I have poured out of my heart to you this day. And I ~~do~~ know that my love will



grow even greater each day of my life. I shall be the handsomest man on earth the day of our wedding because I shall be marrying you whom everyone loves so much and because there is no girl in all the world like my Eileen. I have been around one half of the world and you have been around the other half, and we have never met another Eileen O'Kane! Yes, you are a terrible girl, but I adore you! My darling, I worry about you at times in case you should feel "all out of it" at home; I mean everyone seems to be married except ourselves. Even Frances and Roland may be married before us. In a way I feel a little pang at my heart when I hear of a new wedding, but my darling child our day will come too and we shall have our own home. Then all these weary months of waiting and praying and longing will only be happy memories - all our letters, snaps, telegrams, and greetings will be souvenirs of our great love. You must promise not to allow me to read the letters I have written to you; it would break my heart to read the boring things I sent to you from Malaya. However it will be fun telling you about my (our) Malayan Snaps. Have you bought our album yet, Eileen? I want you to tell me all about it as you fill it up. Also my snap-crazy has died down and now Snaps are out of the question these days, but my chance will come again and you shall have heaps of Snaps of Malaya, Kampungs, and the fishing fleet, when an opportunity arises. The main difficulty here is lack of good films. I must have a snap taken of myself in my new Australian felt hat; when you see it you will think that your Frank has joined the North West Mounted Police! My darling, I am the only officer lucky enough to get one of these hats and they are really very smart - much nicer than topies or caps. You should see me in my new raincoat (cape); it has a collar which I wear over my hat. I am an awful looking sight, but then everyone is!

And so another year has gone and I am 29 years of age! It has been a grand birthday spent with you my darling. Today I have remembered every single member of your family and mine too; Frances was not forgotten - I said a

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special prayer for her intentions. I shall write to her soon again and to your Mamma too. Good night and God bless you my own dearest Helen and thank you for my happy, happy birthday.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5TH - My dearest one, some journals have arrived for you today from Kuala Lumpur Museum. They are all very interesting to me because I am living in this country, and I only hope you too will find them interesting. They are the journals of the Federated Malay States Museums and their titles deal with expeditions to Borneo, North Borneo, Sumatra, and most interesting of all is one written by an Englishman called Moore and describes in detail the various aborigines of Malaya. They are all well illustrated by photographs - mountain peaks, jungle, lakes, streams, queer ~~and~~ <sup>small</sup> villages and their inhabitants, - I just cannot describe them to you. They contain very valuable maps which also I cannot send to you. Your girls will surely love these books especially the pictures. It makes me so happy when I have things to send to you, because they are all tokens of my love for you no matter how small they may be. And yet I am still worrying about the greatest token of all - the engagement ring which I ordered to be cabled to you many weeks ago. I have not heard definitely as yet from the jeweller whether it has been despatched to you from London. I shall feel so relieved and so happy when I know that it has reached you safely. I shall be contented only when it is on your finger. My darling, I wanted to ask you often whether you wear the little sapphire ring always on your ring finger, even in school? We shall always treasure that ring because it was really our first engagement ring. Your Auntie is a dear to lend you her dress ring for special occasions.

I am expecting a letter from you at the week-end, Helen, as it is now about a fortnight since the last one arrived. I just live for your letters and every word you have to tell me about yourself, home, our friends, your dreams and prayers. I think

Sometimes that you are too generous to me with all the prayers you offer up for me and the hosts of people you have asked to pray for me. I should be a saint with all these good folk's prayers, but I am no saint. I try to be good and pray very hard but oh how I miss all the things that you have in abundance at home - the masses, Confession, Daily Communion, and Devotion. Thank God you have all these blessings and graces; you are a very lucky young woman to be surrounded by such aids to holiness. I have awful heartache when I think of what I shall miss at Christmastide.

Today has been quiet in camp as most of the men were out. However I had some fun with a few troops when we went "down in the forest" to dig some turf in an open glade. We are making a nice plot of green grass in camp to receive the morning - if possible; Among other things I appear to be the camouflage officer too! Anything and everything except doctoring! My birthday is very far off today but my 29th was a very pleasant one please God we shall both spend our 30th birthdays together. We shall be so old then, Ellen!! My own darling, our ages do not matter one iota; what matters is that we love each other so much and that we love God too with all our hearts. He and His Blessed Mother will surely bless us, our love, and our marriage because we shall pray to them without ceasing.

Good night my dearest and God bless you.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6th. My own darling, it is nearly 11 P.M.

and this is the first chance I have had to write you a line. Today has been another landmark of my stay in Malaya and it has been a nightmare of work for me. Even now I should not be looily sitting here writing to my best girl, but I had to tell you that I love you with all my heart and soul and self; you have all of me and all of my love, and I shall always love you no matter what may happen. This letter will surely be my last to you for a long time though I hope and pray that this will not be so. As usual I can tell you nothing of what is going on around me and why

I am so busy. Thank God I can always keep cool and think in a crisis, so I did get things done today without any undue fuss. I shall pray harder in these days than I have ever done before. I shall keep near to you, Lileen, always and nothing shall ever separate us. If this should be my farewell letter to you, my darling, then I must tell you that these past months we have spent together have been the most glorious and the happiest and holiest of my whole life. Can you forgive me for being so blind in the past and so stupid. I have even hurt you whom I have always adored so much. My own darling, I did not dream then that you were in love with me or things would have been so different. I was hoping and waiting and praying for your love - and now that it has come I am happy.

I am sorry this note must be so short but I shall have more time to write soon. At present I am "holding the fort" here. Good night and God bless you my darling.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7th - I am not in my cosy little wooden hut to night but in the office. I am sleeping here to night beside the phone because the whole country is in a state of emergency - still I am very very happy. I had a wonderful letter from you this morning, dated September 28th; your letters now come regularly every fortnight nowadays and nearly always on Sundays. If I ever needed your letter it was today; you never let me down, Lileen, and your letters always come just when I need them most. You may know about the crisis here and how large Japanese convoys were seen by the R.A.F. patrols approaching the Gulf of Siam; this is not secret but was announced on the radio today. Naturally everyone in Malaya is standing by; and this means a total upset to my usual routine, all work and no leisure. Tomorrow today has been quiet but still I have been working the whole day long; I am always in uniform and to night I shall sleep in it! My little automatic is with me day and night, but I know I shall never use it. The important thing to me is that your little medal is ever around my neck and always close to a heart

that will always love you. My love will never change, Eileen; it will always be the same except that it will daily grow stronger and better. I would not be Frank Murray at all unless I were loving you every moment of my life. I would rather you would call me "Frank" than "Francis" because you have known me by that name from the first. I always preferred St. Francis of Assisi to your Xavier, but since coming out East I have realised how great a Saint St. Francis Xavier really was. The influence he had over the natives of Southern India was amazing - they worshipped him and his statue in all over India. The Jesuits brought their Catholicity with them to the subter states of Malaya and all this was due to the Xavier.

My darling, I was so sorry to learn about your defeat in the Patrick Cup. You played very well; you did your best, what more could you do? I love you more now than before you lost your cup. I know you were disappointed, Eileen, and so I share your defeat with you; but I was not disappointed in you and never shall be. I have always loved you my dearest one for your own sweet self and everything that you were; and now I find that you have grown lovelier than ever before in yourself, in your ways, and in grace. You have nothing to live up to in my estimation; you will always be the same Eileen please God. So never, never say that I shall be disappointed when we meet again. That meeting can only make our happiness complete. I am a very proud man and a very lucky one too to have the love of such a good girl as you; I shall be ever so proud of your goodness. I love you for your holiness. We would not be happy unless we had true love; it would not be real love without holiness and there would be no holiness without prayer.

In your letter you have mentioned our ring again and how you wished me to purchase it in Malaya, and bring it home with me for you. Alas my darling you know nothing about the East! In India and in Malaya all good (so called) jewellery is English made - probably comes from Birmingham! The local stuff is cheap and badly finished; you could not wear it, my dear child. Hyderabad jewels do exist apart from

story books, but all the good stuff is tucked away in the Benjamin's coffers! My darling,  
 I had to take a chance and have your ring sent from London. I wanted so desperately to  
 have it sent before war should come to the Far East, so that you could wear it always.  
 If the ring should not suit you, Helen, then please just wear the signet ring until  
 the war is over and then we shall have another one instead. Actually they have not  
 sent the bill yet and so it is not too late to change our arrangements. They have been  
 so very slow about it all that I am disgusted with them. You simply must have  
 that ring for Christmas Day. The photograph of my mother was lovely, Helen; so thank  
 Margaret for being so thoughtful. Today Father Girard offered up a Mass at Kuala Lumpur  
 for Josie and to-morrow one will be said to-morrow. I have a special love for the  
 Immaculate Conception and every day of my life I have never missed my 3 Hail Marys  
 and after each - "Oh, Mary, by thy pure and Immaculate Conception, make my body pure and  
 my soul holy."

And now it is Au revoir once again, my own darling. You  
 know that the longer we are apart the more I shall love you. I am all yours and I  
 am yours forever. Your happiness is all that I live for; I hope and pray that my love can  
 make you half as happy as yours has made me. I do have dreadful spasms when I long  
 to see you again with all my heart, but thank God I am spanned a lot of pain by prayer  
 - this brings great peace and comfort to me at such times. Give my love to all  
 at home and to Frances. When you see my Gony again give him my regards and  
 ask him to write to me.

May God bless you, Helen, and keep you safe from all harm. May He send  
 me home soon again to you.

Love your loving  
 Frank.