

Marseille, July 28th, 1945

Billy dear,

I am deeply sorry for not having written you earlier, right after arriving we had to start rehearsing and I did not have a single minute to myself. I am happy because before leaving I received your charming card and your very kind letter. Billy darling, I do not like Marseille and I am sad. I feel very alone. Mother is with me but I rarely see her since she cannot stay with me. I am in a hotel reserved for the officers. With me, there is a friend from Nice, we are the only young girls in the troupe, the rest is made up of 6 American soldiers in addition to the orchestra.²⁵ I am doing a little bit of everything, I dance, I see some comedy and I sing with an American tenor. But Billy darling, all of this does not prevent me from thinking about you, we will maybe go perform in Nice at the Red Cross. Billy darling, the commanding officers wanted me to change my makeup and my hairstyle.²⁶ Now, I am wearing dark makeup and a tall hairstyle, as soon as I have some photos I will think of you. We will maybe be dressed in uniforms with pants.²⁷ Billy darling, your photos are in my room and I look at them very often. Billy darling, I am obliged to leave you because it is time to go rehearse, I ask you to write me very soon at Uncle Lodin's who will get your letters to me. Mother sends her best regards. Receive Billy darling, all my love and a thousand kisses.

JANY

P.S. Billy Darling, I beg you to write me soon and to excuse me for the delay

²⁵Interestingly, in the days leading up to D-Day, performances were still being held alongside U.S. troops. Different troops were tasked with traveling around Europe and the UK in anticipation of the invasion. The Foxhole circuit, the European leg of the tour, had the performers living and existing like the soldiers they were entertaining. As Jany points out, performers had to fit in, often eating the same meals as the troops and wearing similar uniforms. By the end of the war, the USO had put on over 420,000 performances, sending around 7,300 entertainers overseas and entertaining over 130 million servicemen.

²⁶Many women during the war changed their makeup and hairstyles to match the overall feeling of the world. Makeup was not only darkened and emboldened for female performances to display their femininity but also to match the uniforms they had to wear. The housewife look was very attractive during the 1940s not only because the sight of women was rare for the soldiers but also served as a reminder of all the wives and girlfriends they had left back home. Another reason for the change could be linked to scarcity of cosmetics in Europe, it was easier for women to have a couple of makeup items rather than splurging on countless shades and accessories. Additionally, wearing one's hair up was not necessarily for style but rather for convenience, the hair didn't need to be in their faces or getting messed up during their performances.

²⁷Many women during WWII were either trained as volunteers or performers. This meant that when women were on base, they were asked to change into uniforms to either blend in with the soldiers they were serving or for convenience. The Red Cross provided many different uniform styles from long dresses with long coats, to long skirts or shirts or in this case uniforms with pants and a blazer. Women were encouraged to assimilate into their new lifestyles which could be done by sporting military issued uniforms.