

Nice, August 21st, 1945

My dear Billy,

I received your letter from the 12th of August this morning. I am very happy and so is Gaby. But I think that it would be better if I continue in French because otherwise, you will not be able to understand me. At this moment my dear Billy, you should be in Naples and I am strongly sorry to see you are going further away from us. In Livorno you were relatively close to us and we thought we would see you arrive from one moment to another. Besides in Nice, we see a lot of your friends having “The Libertad” on their arms. But from now on, could you come to Nice on leave? Naples is very far from us and more so, your leaves are for the moment suspended. But like you said, I hope that it is only a temporary measure and that already leaves have been reestablished. No doubt that they had been suspended only during your trip. My old Billy, do one thing then. Take a Jeep and poof!⁹³ Run off to Nice.⁹⁴ Alas, it is only just a joke that cannot be realized. We have, on our side, learned with great joy about the end of the war with the Japanese. Finally peace, total peace and the guarantee that you will not fight in the Pacific. I am equally very happy for your sister Carol who must have been very worried about the fate of her husband. However, I didn’t know that your sister was married and I was already prepared to poison Gaby to be able to ask you for her hand [in marriage]. I will therefore have to resign myself. Poor Gilbert! But all things considered, I will poison her regardless so that I can marry Jany if however, she will take me. And you, my dear Billy, do you think that you will return soon to America? You must, I think, be waiting for the moment of return impatiently. But

⁹³The Jeep was the preferred vehicle of the US Army because it was small, lightweight, had four-wheel drive and capable of carrying heavy military equipment. The Jeep was also used to conduct reconnaissance missions and also served as a leading vehicle of commanders heading into battle. The Jeep also was instrumental in providing medical supplies across battlefields and providing cover if necessary. From 1940 to 1941, the Jeep was mass produced at the behest of the US Army.

⁹⁴Serving in the military is highly honored and revered, veterans who fought in WWII are also highly respected and admired. However, the war was still a very chaotic, complicated and traumatic experience to live through, especially for soldiers on the front lines. Many soldiers reached their breaking point during the war especially during combat, this led to a number of soldiers deserting their duties. Army records show that around 50,000 American soldiers deserted their posts in the European Theater. Soldiers who ran away or went AWOL were known as deserters because they abandoned their military responsibilities without permission with no intent of returning. The stories of Deserters are rarely explored or told because of the general cowardice that is associated with the act. Additionally, during the war, the subject of Deserters was rarely featured in the news because it was seen as bad for morale and could potentially be exploited by the enemy. Many American soldiers who deserted were convicted and sentenced to death not only to send a message to their fellow soldiers but to also demonstrate the Army’s authority and power over the soldiers’ lives.

I warn you that if you return to Chicago without passing to see us, I will take the chopper and I will come get you to bring you to Nice to have a goodbye dinner.⁹⁵ You told me that your friend Albert had some Spanish and Japanese ancestors. I would have thought that he was of Italian descent because he speaks Italian fluently and seems to particularly like the Italians. If in Livorno the weather was not good, here in Nice the sun also disappeared. I don't like it however but it is not very beautiful. I have Jany next to me who is supervising my letter. She just finished writing you and now wants to know at all costs what I am writing you. I assure you that she finds the time very long when she doesn't have a letter from you and this morning she was jealous of me. But tonight the morale is better because she received two letters from you. So tonight everything is going well. As I told you in my last letter, I did receive the package that you gave to your friend for me. Again a thousand times thank you! But I didn't congratulate you on your plan? xxxxx. Your friend couldn't be wrong. But Jany just left in telling me to give you some big kisses from her. I give you her message but for you, it wouldn't be the same. Now that she is no longer here I will tell you that she loves you very, very much. I don't know if she dares to tell you this but oh well, I told you. Don't talk to her about it my old Billy. I leave you for this evening in thank you again for your letter. Gaby joins me in sending you our sincerest regards.

Your old uncle

Sincerely,

Gilbert

⁹⁵Following his parents released from the concentration camp in Utah, his parents began working "as domestics for a wealthy family in Chicago" where his father bought a 5 unit apartment in Chicago. Though Bill visited his parents initially in Chicago, he returned to the West Coast to start his own business; Chopper means helicopter