

April 26th, 1945

My dear Bill,

I have been very glad yesterday when I found your two good letters. Nearly at every dance I talk with Andrée and she always asks me if I have news from you. Just tonight there is a dance with – for the first and may be for the only time – the Glenn Miller's orchestra.²⁶ It played already last night but there was no admittance for the french girls I long much to hear it because I have been told it is very famous band in America. Did you hear it and what do you think about it? Yes, Andrée is a very charming girl. She is very fond of dancing but she is always anxious of Tom. Now she thinks you are not fighting because he told her that you're in the same place as before; but she is afraid that Tom makes the acquaintance of a beautiful and delightful italian girl and that he forgets her... I think she is quite wrong and I told her because Tom is a good and faithful boy and the proof is his daily letter: don't you think so? With my great experience of grand-mother!!! I believe that only the true lovers have such anxiety- Amen. — (by the way, your memory is wrong: you never introduced me to Andrée's mother.) Since you letters I am quite impatient for receive your parcel and seeing how beautifully is the cloth and the other things. Happily you can mail it because I think you have no more friends in the hospital now. But, please, Bill, tell me how much I have to send to your girl-friend with all my thanks. She has been so nice to trouble herself for me. Does she live in Oakland?²⁷ Is she a friend of your sister too? My brother is in Avignon in the engine corps.²⁸ His officer told him they will go soon in

²⁶The Glenn Miller Orchestra rose to popularity during the war because Big Band music was at the height of its acclaim. It was one of the few acts that was famous both in the United States and abroad, people felt that the orchestra's music went beyond entertainment and provided a sense of warmth and passion. In 1941, the band expanded its expertise to films and produced several of them. Interestingly, during the bands most popular year (1942), Glen Miller decided to apply to the US Navy but was rejected. Fortunately, the US Army accepted Glen Miller's commission and he soon became Captain Miller of the US Army.

²⁷Billy and his siblings were born in Oakland, CA. Billy's father lived and worked in Oakland until 1921. Billy's childhood was characterized by his involvement in the Methodist church which was located in West Oakland.

²⁸Avignon is a ommune in France located on the river Rhône. This city was occupied by the German Army in 1942. A series of bombings in late August (1944) was responsible for the city's liberation.

The United States Army Corps of Engineers, made up of the Engineer Regiment, military construction and civil works, was assigned across Europe during WWII. In 1944, the army specially trained the combat engineers who were assigned with blowing up underwater obstacles or clearing out defended ports. In Europe, they were also responsible for building numerous bridges including floating tactical bridges which were often destroyed after use. The engineers were also responsible with maintaining or even reconstruction roads to prevent any transport or traveling interruptions.

Germany. Now they learn to build a bridge on a night and to cross on it the durance²⁹ with their stools and stones. They learn too to blow it up, to put and put off mines etc... That is very interesting and especially for him on intended architect with the theoretical and practical studies. We hope he will be able to come for Whitesunday before he goes...³⁰ but we hope much more that the war comes to its end very soon, though we have to think about Japan and Indo-China...³¹ I am glad of thinking you have good discussions about life and its so many problems, all together with your friends. Because, as I see you can understand me, I may tell you that now, I have been very often disapointed with the American boys for when life is not a problem, who live without being aware of what is life, who don't know what they have to do, or what they do on earth and who don't try to know it. They are just incognito passengers, immerged in a comfortable materialism– I hear they just use the best as possible of all the modern conveniences, they run gaily along their days as children use to do. May be it's the right way to be happy on this earth and when I say I have been disapointed I may be wrong with my thought. In fact, in France, we don't use to think as they do: we are told to be an old people and you, americans, a young people: that's true in a way. I remember when in August-September I met the first Americans they seemed me like children and great was my surprise and nearly my admiration. But in the long run I thought if we need to make us young again-thinking, dreaming less and doing more practically–Americans need to make them more deep (profound?). And I stop by saying, as I believe it, our meeting may be a very good thing in each side³² people know they can improve one by another. Bill, do you think you understand really what I mean? My english is so poor that I am very embarrassed to put³³ down my thought. Tell me if something is hard to understand in my letter. Now, pupil Iino, look at your mistakes of french. Comme ci,

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³⁰Whitsun or Whitsunday is a religious holiday celebrated throughout the world by Catholics, Anglicans and Methodists. It is the seventh Sunday after Easter and is in recognition of the Christian High Holy Day of Pentecost.

³¹France's involvement in Southeast Asia stems from 1858 through WWII. In 1939, the coastal area of Indochina was used for its supplies slike tea, rice, coffee, pepper, coal and rubber. Once Germany defeated Fance, France attempted to maintain their control in Asia. With little success, France was looking to its American and British allies but no support was provided. In 1940, Thai troops provoked French Indochina while the Japanese negotiated the different territories forcing the French to admit defeat in September of that same year. Following this defeat, the US became more involved and banned the export of materials to Japan which evidently played a large role in cutting off the supply route for the Chinese.

³²*for each of us*

³³*write*

comme ça³⁴ (and not cum sea, cum saa) – bonjour³⁵ (and not buonjour) Yes, try to learn french. I may be your teacher if you are not lazy, yes? no? Good-bye, Bille - so long-

Sincerely yours

Suzanne

P.S. Colette and Ernest say “hello” - he asked me about you. My regards to Tom. I have to kindly remember my mother to you³⁶

³⁴*so-so*

³⁵*hello*

³⁶*best regards from my mother*