27th Field Ambulance,
c/o Army Base Post Office,
Singapore,
Tuesday, 6th January.

My own darling Eileen,

The war in Malaya is about a month old and still I am here writing to you as if nothing had happened! I have written every day - some days it was a line, other days it was a page, but it was always the same story I wanted to tell you, that I love you with all my heart and soul. War can only make me love you more; I am more yours now than I have ever been.

There is a roof over my head to-night again but I have grown to love the open sky as my roof - it gives such freedom. We are having a short breathing space at present but it won't be for long you may be sure. My friend Capt. Pearson called to see me to day and we had a long chat together; he had great adventures in the front line with his gallant gunners. We talked of happy days in the hills of India in peace. His wife is now in Simla and they are expecting their second baby soon and Jack is very worried about it. He has not heard from his wife since he recently came to Malaya. We had planned here to have a few days at this spot and I tried hard to be allowed to stay but the powers above said that I must move. Pearson is staying on here for awhile.

My darling, I am happy, very happy and you must not worry about my safety. God bless you and keep you, Eileen dear.

Wednesday - January 7th - My darling, this has been my happiest day for many a day and yet all my days are happy because they are spent with

you my beloved one. Last night I slept on a stretcher in a lovely garden and as I lay looking up at those misty stars I prayed hard for you and asked Him to send all my love to you. I got up at 5a.m. and my day has been long and weary. To night there is another more beautiful garden to sleep in, although the house is marvellous too. It is full of specimens from all over Malaya because the owner is the Government official for your pet subject at Queens! Is this very mysterious to you - well darling I must not even mention the subject in case it would be of use to the enemy. Anyhow this chap has a marvellous collection and I may be able to ask him for a few for you, Coleen. That subject of yours which kept me waiting for hours and hours outside Queens, watching and watching that wooden hut and for my beloved to emerge from Prof. Charlesworths lecture! That waiting of hours became the waiting of years but it was not in vain because I won your love in the end. That was all I wanted of life and God has been so very good to me. You know that? I have always loved you and that I always shall love you. Oh my darling I feel that writing to you about my love can give you so little idea of how deep and true it is. Some day you will know how much love is in this heart of mine for you - it is all yours and always shall be yours.

I am on duty to night and expect to be busy. Your last letter has not been posted yet because there is no place to post it from! Good night my own darling and God bless you.

Thursday January 8th. Oh, what a night I have had under Malayan sky - it rained last night! I was covered by a groundsheet, so I was not soaked through entirely. My darling, it was grand and this morning I felt so refreshed after my bath of rain! I had many interruptions from casualties arriving, but that did not worry

me at all. You know of course that casualties do not mean that there men are wounded - they can also be medical cases and accident cases too. Tonight I intend putting up my hammock instead of being entirely without shelter. I have got used to this life, I can get used to anything quickly and adapt myself to the surroundings.

My darling, I actually love you a little bit more today than yesterday, did you think it was possible? Well, it has happened and here I am today loving you with all my heart and soul - with a little bit extra thrown in! I can never love you enough, Eileen, no matter how hard I may try. You should not love me so much as you do because I am a worthless fellow. Your memories of me must be those of a very awkward and shy schoolboy, who used pester you morning, noon and night with his love and his attentions. What would you have said if you had seen me in that tramcar passing and re-passing "Spring Villa" to catch a glimpse of you, my dearest one. The more you avoided me the more I persisted in following you and loving you. We have both grown up now and childhood has been left behind, but what memories we have of those days. You have become quite a lady now and you have lost your plump round cheeks of childhood, but this has made you more beautiful than ever in my eyes. I peep at you often each day and I know that I love you more each time. Your medal and your lock of hair are kept ever close to my heart no matter where I go or what I do. My only worry is you my dearest one in case you are worried about me. Oh, if I could only send you a telegram I would feel so much happier and contented, but I cannot as telegrams are not allowed to be sent. How I do hope and pray that some of my letters will reach you safely, as there are so many dangers attached to their safe arrival. My darling, if I could only send you a message each day, you know that I would. I would send you a special

plane with my letters, but alas that is not possible! Oh my Eileen our reunion cannot now be far off and I am praying that it may come soon. Surely He will understand and bring us together again soon.

Good night my darling and God bless you.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 9th - Today is the fourth anniversary of Josie's death (R.I.P.) How I wish that you had known and loved that child; she was an angel and died as innocent as the day she was born. Maybe you have heard all about her from my dear ones at home because they all loved her too. I remember kissing her Goodbye after my short Christmas holiday in 1937; she was a picture as she lay back on her pillow - her goodness, her innocence, and her patience were all reflected in her face. I knew then that she would not live very long. It was such a tragedy to see such a child passing slowly away from us and we could do nothing to stop it all - and yet the Murray family could see that it was Gods holy will that Josie should die. Father always taught us never to fear death, because it was God who sent it in His own good time. Josie is in Heaven now thank God she has not lived to see the most awful war - she was never meant to see war.

Good night my dearest one and God bless you.

SATURDAY January 10th - My darling, I love you.

Sunday January 11th - My own darling, I still love you. Just have time to say that I shall always be yours no matter how long this war may last.

Monday January 12th. - At last a rest and time to write you a whole page. Do you think I am an awful person not to have written much during these past few days? I just haven't had a moments rest for ages - it has been hard work day and night without ceasing. My own darling, you know that you have not been out of my thoughts for a moment. You have been with me as I sat one night tending a wounded man - he was

very ill and I thought he would not live till morning. I prayed hard that he would live and pressed my crucifix to his lips, and I nursed him myself. Thank God he lived and I heard he reached safely in good condition. At last I am a doctor and can do something worth while in the army. I wish that I could tell you everything about myself in this war, my movements, and my adventures, but you will hear them all some day soon as we sit by our fireside together. I shall not have much time for telling you about the war, I shall be too busy telling you of my love.

I am sitting in a basket chair (oh what a luxury!) outside a nice bungalow which is situated on a little hillock which overlooks a large plantation. There is peace here, there is quiet; it is cool; the evening sky is clouded but it is very lovely as it floats these dark hills in the distance. We arrived here in the early hours of the morning and I slept in the verandah on my camp bed - and oh I was tired and sleepy after a long (most distant) drive. I was leading a large convoy and everything went well, thank God. Eileen, my dearest one, I wish you could see me always and know what happens to me in Malaya without actually being here, then you would realise how happy I am in my trunk here. It is hard, it means days and nights without rest or sleep; it means discomfort and no cooked meals, but I do not even notice these things. God has given me a very philosophic mind - I can take everything that comes along in my stride; I have reached the stage where nothing is a hardship for me. Honestly, Eileen I sing the whole day long and try to make others happy - and I do succeed. I know that I can make you happy too my darling, and nothing will ever be spared by me until I have succeeded in this. That is my one concern.

Good night my darling and may the good God bless you and keep you safe always.

V.

Tuesday - January 13th - My darling, it rains and rains in Malaya - 24 hours without ceasing - but I love you all the more! You are my happiness and you are my life. We are completely cut off from each other by land and sea but we have never been closer together than this evening. Nothing can ever separate us, nothing can ever destroy our love - it will last forever and ever. Oh Eileen, even in this hour of trial our love is deeper and truer than ever; it will save us from despondency. It will make us pray harder and bring us nearer to God - and that is the most important thing in our lives. The only reason we were created was that we might love Him; He has given us a very wonderful love and has blessed it in a very special way. I am looking at your photograph (wedding group) at my side and oh how I am pouring out all the love of my heart to you at this moment - and you know that it is pouring out always for you. I can see you in your classroom now (nearly midday) and you look so very serious and earnest. You were always a very earnest young woman no matter what you were doing - working or playing. I love and always have loved everything about you.

I can hear a Gramophone playing "The Mountains of Mourne" in this far off Malaya! It has never sounded so sweet and it has never made me more homesick for you and my dear ones. Some day soon, please God we shall be united again and have great happiness. Think of long Summer days spent at Beechwood in those pleasant surroundings; think of long winter evenings at our fireside, think of the security we shall know and the contentment and peace of mind within those solid walls. It will be a real Home and it will be blessed by the Sacred Heart. Do not worry, Eileen, it will all come soon. Good night and God bless you my dearest one.

Wednesday - January 14th — Eileen alannah, I just cannot love you any more than I do today. I write to you and write to you and tell you all about it, but you never respond! Oh my darling, your letters cannot reach me, but your love and your prayers reach me every day - nothing else matters to me in the world. I am hoping and praying that some of my letters will reach you and that they will bring you some consolation. If you were to see me now you would not worry for a single moment about me. I am happy; I am strangely elated in a way that defies explanation. Should I not be happy even in the midst of war? I have got you, my darling, always before me and that is why I can never be unhappy again in my life; I have got my prayers and I never neglect them; I have got my work and I am contented. Oh if only I could do something to ease your mind and not allow you to worry.

I am sitting in this beautiful garden and away in the horizon I can see the sun setting behind the hills. There is a lime tree beside me and hundreds of limes hanging up there untouched - what wouldn't you give to have these limes; there are hundreds of kinds of flowers here and trees of every variety. If you were to imagine an ideal setting for a Plantation medley, then you would find it up here in this terraced garden overlooking a vast stretch of plantation. About a mile away are the Coolies quarters - so neat and trim; out in the open air - their own playgrounds, their own cows and goats, their own little kingdom of peace and contentment. Soon they may lose all of this and I am wondering what they will be given in return; somehow war always hurts the innocent most of all. There are Malayan raindrops on this page so never say that I have not sent you anything from Malaya. Did you ever receive any of the magazines I sent you? I wanted you to have the silver candlesticks very specially

because they are symbols of our love - yours and mine. Did you receive the souvenirs of Malaya sent by Father Ashness? I did not see these at all but they must have been interesting for you. May be you showed them to the girls at School? There were so many things I had planned on sending to you but my plans all fell through when the war came. How terribly sorry and disappointed I am about the ring, you can never know, but my darling, some day soon we shall buy it; we shall go arm-in-arm to town and buy the most beautiful ring in all the world. It was your wish that we should wait until I come home to you before we select a ring. I shall always see that precious signet ring on your finger - it is a strange engagement ring but it is very dear to us both. My darling, I shall be back very soon and you must never think otherwise. I shall love you till I die; my love will not die with me because I shall love you after death. I may not have a chance again of telling you all this, but you know and feel how true it all is. My love just could not change.

And now the sun has gone and it's very dark out here. There is light enough for me to tell you again that I am yours forever and ever. Good night my dearest one and may God bless you.

Thursday January 15th. - I am still in the same garden and still loving you more than ever. Have you ever thought it strange that all our happiness should come to us as it did - while we were thousands of miles apart. Eileen my darling if we were so happy during all these months without even seeing each other, what joy shall we not have when we meet again. I am overjoyed when I think of what the future holds for us - the present does not matter very much. We love each other, we love God and we trust in Him - What more could we ask of life? We know

that He will bring us together again. I am watching this glorious sunset away down in the west and oh the beauty of this creation of His. I am far away from that lovely shore where I used have those grand swims, but the Japs are now enjoying the swims! But that does not worry me very much - in fact not at all. My only concern at present is you, my darling child; I want to know if you are well, if you are happy; I want to hear of your dreams and hopes. I do not want you to worry or be sad, because there is nothing to worry about. Believe, my dearest one, our love can never be sad; it has always been a happy one and it must always remain like that. I hope all is well with you; that your work goes on smoothly as mine does and that you are still happy with your colleagues at school. Please go home as often as you can to see your mummie and daddie, and all your dear ones - it will help you a lot if you do. Go to Beechwood if you can and see them all there - father's quiet confidence in prayer will give you fresh hope. I know that you will seek real comfort in prayer; how I thank God that you can pray so earnestly.

We are still resting, but it may not be for much longer. The bombers still come but they do not cause us a thought - one gets used to bombs! I have done a little medical work today and that helps a lot. I am at peace with God and with my fellows; I keep out of squabbles and now - I mind my own business! Many people here marvel at my placidity - I just keep on laughing and singing no matter what comes along. I can hear "She is far from the Land" on the radio, but I am far from that land just now and not a little homesick. My friend Venus is shining away up in the western sky; the bats are flying around me and I must go off to my bath. Good night my darling and God bless you.

X

FRIDAY January 16th — My own darling, it is late but I must write and tell you news about myself. Today I have been appointed Commanding Officer of a Motor Ambulance Convoy and transferred from the Field Ambulance. I am leaving here tomorrow or on Sunday to take up my new job. My darling, you can never know how sorry I shall be to leave this unit and all the men I have learned to love so much. My new job is a responsible one and very important. It means promotion to Major again — so next Major Murray again. How often must I change my title? Rank does not make any difference to me, Eileen; I shall never change in any way except to love you more and more the longer I live. Now that I have been promoted again, I lay my new honours at your feet; just as I give everything I have to you. My new unit is a British unit with British Officers; I have about fifty ambulances under my command and I am responsible for evacuation of casualties in the backward areas (behind the field ambulances). Can you imagine me being a C.O.? Well let me tell you young woman that I was a C.O. in a hospital in India when I had only 6 months service! My only worry now is how to part with these men.

The Australians are giving the Japs a rough time not far from here and there is every likelihood that the tide has turned in Malaya. Our bombers and fighters were busy today pounding the enemy good and hard they have lost 20 tanks in the past 24 hours. All the casualties are on the Jap side. My darling, you know that I love you and that I shall always love you. This war will soon be over and you will have me with you again please God. So please keep your chin up till then. Good night my own darling and God bless you.

SATURDAY – JANUARY 17th – My darling, I am still with the Irish Ambulance but I am leaving to-morrow. So you realise, young woman that I shall be a very important person from now onwards! Do you think I shall be too important to bother about a little Irish school marm?! Oh, my darling, you know that worldly honours mean nothing to your Frank; the only honour that he prizes above all else on this earth is your love, Eileen. That is all I shall ever want in this life. You have all my love and all of me – I shall always belong to you and only you. You have seen great happiness in Spring Villa and you have seen great love there too, but my dearest one our happiness and our love will be even greater than that when we are married. Our love and our prayers will overcome anything during our married life. Pray be you feel as I do now, a strange quiet joy even with a terrible war raging around us – it cannot be explained by ordinary means. It is a happiness that will always sustain me. My own darling, I have wonderful news for you – I shall probably be able to have daily Mass and Communion at my new station! I shall be able to visit the Little Sisters and the Redemptorists and that will bring me fresh joy. I shall tell them about you and Mattie and our romance; I shall give them that Christmas present that has been so long delayed by war. So now you know where my new station is or at least you can guess it. I have always wanted to see it but now it will be seen under war conditions. I did not beg even a little bit to be sent there, I did not beg to become a major again, I did not beg to be transferred. When I lost my promotion I only smiled and did not complain; and now that it has come again I am still smiling but I am not exultant or overjoyed about it. The only reason it makes me happy is that my promotion might bring you some joy. I want you to be proud of me. My father too will feel so pleased about it. Oh how very sorry I felt for him when my demotion came; I felt as if I had let him down – and yet I had it

really. All the time I have been in this unit I have tried to be good and just to everyone, no matter what their rank. I have been in charge of all the stores, (medical and ordnance) but no one will check my stores before I leave because they know me – it is the first time that I have ever seen any stores handed over in the army to another Officer without a careful check. I have been as strictly honest as my father and that is praising myself a lot. Never once have I asked any favours of my superiors; never have I tried to shine in the eyes of the powers above – would you believe it that I actually avoided all the big men for that very reason. And now nobody can accuse me of canvassing the powers above for my new appointment. How they knew of my existence at all I do not know! Eileen, do you think that I am too independent? I was the same when in practice, I would not go out of my way to meet the big men of Birmingham who could help a lot to get me a big job in the city. You know as I do the contentment and satisfaction one can have in doing one's work well and to the best of one's ability – material reward means little to you or to me. We shall go through life together like this. Oh Eileen we have so much to be thankful for. Please God we shall not have lived in vain because all our work, our love, and prayers will be offered up to Him. I want us to have something worth while to show Him when our lives are ended; we shall pray each day for grace to always do the right thing and do all for Him.

I have so much to tell you on this my last evening in this lovely garden. The sun is going down again but I must be off soon to my farewell party. Yes, the men are giving me a farewell party and I feel so honoured because it has never been given to any Officer before. I found a lady picture in this garden yesterday and it is a lovely one, but written on the back is "1927 To such dear Eileen every joy – Winnie". I have kept it as a souvenir of the happiness I have

known here. The picture shows our Blessed Lady plucking lilies for the Child Jesus. My dearest one I must go now as they are all waiting for me. God bless you now and always.

Sunday January 18th. My darling, I have arrived! Wonder of wonders I shall be able to send you a cable to-morrow if I have time. I am very busy sorting things out in my new unit. I shall make an exploratory tour to-morrow to find out the nearest church, the Redemptorists and the Little Sisters. I had a wonderful send-off from the field ambulance; I saw many a tearful eye today as I shook hands with all my men. They put a garland of flowers around my neck and off I went in my car.

God bless you, Eileen and may He keep you safe.

Monday January 19th My darling, I have not sent you cable yet, but it really will be sent to-morrow. I was very busy all morning interviewing all the big men here and getting instructions about my new unit. I reached the bank at 1.30 p.m. to find it closed and so I had no money to send the cable with! I saw all the sights of this grand place on my rounds this morning and met its very mixed population. Yes, it is an attractive place and is everything we read about. I spent my evening looking up a phone directory trying to find a church somewhere. I rang up a man called O'Sullivan at random (thinking he would be a catholic); he was very decent and gave me all the information I wanted – when he had finished he remarked that he was a Church of England minister! However he said that did not matter but he only wished that some of his flock would ring up about churches – "They never do, you know!" he remarked. Then I discovered a name "Father Lee, St. Teresa's Church" in the book and he gave me exact details about St. Joseph's Church which is 4 miles from here. So, my darling, I am off to Mass to-morrow

morning and oh how I shall pray. Did you know that I love and adore you with all my heart and soul and that I shall always do so? I can't help loving you as much as I do.

I had a phone call today from Lt. Col. T.K. Murphy RAMC; he was one time president of the Irish Students Union – he is a Cork graduate and claims to know you or me! I met a Ballymena man (RAMC) yesterday! It seems there are heaps of Queenstown here and I am sure to meet them soon. Did I tell you that I arrived in the middle of an air raid yesterday, but nothing happened today. I must buy a pen tomorrow; I lost my other one on my way from the South China Sea! Good night and God bless you, my darling.

Tuesday January 20TH – HAPPY BIRTHDAY! I have prayed so hard that it would be a happy one for you. I went to Church at 7 a.m. but alas there was no Mass – St. Joseph's is a small place, a chapel attached to a boys school; but I knelt before the tabernacle and asked Him to bless you. May you have all the graces and blessings that your heart desires and may you have happiness undreamed of before. My dearest one I have been with you more today than any other day of your life and I have loved you more too. You must have had many happy returns of the day because I wished it to you with all my heart. I sent you a birthday telegram this morning and sent you heaps of love. I sent one to father too. How happy it made me to know that you will receive my greetings tomorrow. How lucky I am to be here as you can see by the stamp or may be it's not lucky to be in 3 air raids in one morning. My darling I heard the bombs exploding down, so they were quite close to your beloved one! I was not afraid and when in my car during one raid just ran on as if nothing was happening – the work must go on.

I shall go to Mass and Communion tomorrow and every

morning for our intentions. I have found out where the Redemptorists and the Little Sisters are living and so I shall try to visit them to morrow if I can find the time. You see my darling, I am now an O.C. in a new job; the war is on here and I have a terrific lot of work to do. I work from early morning till 8 p.m. and also for me it is mostly office work and non-medical too. So you understand why I haven't much time for visiting.

My darling, I went to the bank this morning and drew some ready cash and bought a lovely new Swan pen — did you notice my good printing or didn't you? I also sent you £100 as a birthday present — it is all for you to do what you will with it, to buy what you like for yourself or our home or to put into our joint account. You will agree that this money is much better with you at the moment than with me. I shall send some more next month if I can manage it — we need to have lots of cash in the bank before we can get married! My own beloved Eileen we have got something more precious than all the gold in the world — our love and our religion. These two will never let us down; they are so strong and so reliable and so true, they will both last forever and ever.

Can you forgive this awful letter and understand why it is so patchy. I shall always love you, Eileen. May God bless you and may His blessed mother watch over you and keep you safe from all harm.

Ever your loving

Frank.

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

Frank.