27th Field Ambulance,
c/o Army Base Post Office,
Singapore,
Sunday, November 3rd.

Eileen my own darling,

Another day, another month, nearer to the end of the war and nearer to seeing you again. I have never been closer to your heart than I am now; you have never been dearer to me than now. If I could only tell you how very much I love you Eileen, and how I long to see you again, I would feel much happier. I am still in the same place and I am still happy in my own way here. It is you who has made me so happy - your love, your prayers, and your letters. God alone knows what would have happened to me during all these many trying months in Malaya without you by my side. Yes my dearest one, I have ever kept you by my side and oh what a help you have been to me - in fact my good Guardian Angel must consider you as quite a rival as my protector and guide! I owe my happiness to you, Eileen; I owe everything to you. That is why my only fear now is that I shall never be able to love you enough in return - you have all of me and all of my love; you shall always have these my darling. Yet these seem so small in comparison with what you have given to me. Now I hope and pray that my love can bring you half the happiness that yours has brought to me. Above all else you have made me a better man in God's sight and that is the important thing to our love. Since we found each other I have prayed harder and more earnestly than ever in my life before.

It is now over a week since your last letter reached me and already I am clamouring for the next one - in fact I began clamouring the day after it arrived! It is because I love you so much and your letters bring me such great joy —

I know it is a joy that no other man in Malaya could experience. I do write you very strange despointed letters in my weekly diary. May be I am thoughtless and do not take enough care with them. I set down every evening and write about anything and everything that comes into my head; I tells you what my heart longs to tells you for itself. I tell you of my dreams and hopes and fears. It all must make very boring reading material because I never have anything interesting to tell you - never any news, and so I am ashamed of my letters. Nothing ever happens in this place and the only excitement I know is the arrival of your letters! I could tell you about yesterday and the strange wild man from the Ulu I met on the beach; he had a huge monkey on a chain and this beauty was taller than himself! I could tell you of my coolie friends at the Ferry and my very special coolie whom I call "Charlie" and for whom I bought some bananas yesterday!

To day has been dull because it was a day in camp but life is never dull for a moment with me. This sounds paradoxical but its true, Eileen. I have strange jobs to do and none of them ever approach medicine at all! Please tell me how you manage your young ladies of Loreto Convent when they are naughty; do you have to punish them in some way? I find it very difficult dealing with offenders; I never want to punish a single man - oh what an officer!! However I do notice that when I have to punish the men they always take it well because they know that they have deserved it and never do they bear any malice. I can make them smile five minutes later!! Today I received a copy of the Times Annual 1941 and sent it to Anne. Your copy was sent direct about a month ago and you should have it before Christmas. This was the first time I had seen it (today) and I thought it Grand Stuff; much of it has local interest for me, but I know that you would appreciate it all when you see it. Do you still love me, Eileen?? Are you still the same shy schoolgirl whom I loved so very much in the past and still love or are you very much "grown up"!! My darling

it is past midnight, it is raining out on this verandah, and the mosquitoes are biting! Bed is calling and I cannot resist! What a weak man you are going to marry! Good night my darling and God bless you.

TUESDAY - NOVEMBER 4th :- Eileen, my dearest, are you taking good care of my heart? It has always belonged to you and it always will, but you will have to handle it very carefully because there is so much love in it for you that it is ready to break at any moment. I treasure your love and your heart above all else in the world, and never once in the smallest thought could I betray your trust in me. You know that no matter how long we may be parted, no matter how long we may have to wait for each other, it can make no difference to my love for you - I can only love you more and more the longer I have to wait for you. If two people were ever meant for each other surely we are those two people. We were only children when we first met but we must have loved each other since that day even though we did not fully realise it. It was earnest prayer and nothing else which has brought us together again in spite of the thousands of miles which separated us at the time and in the midst of a horrible war. The awful part for me is that you are in the front line and I am very far removed from the battle-front; you are in danger, while I am safe; your very food and clothing are rationed while I am living in a land of plenty. My heart is ever with you, my dearest one, sharing your danger, your troubles and discomforts. I am so very far away from you and feel so useless no matter how much I may want to help you; so all that I can do is to be with you in spirit and to pray constantly for your safety. My dearest, nothing must ever happen to you; that is why you must take every care of your health and your safety. I could never face life without you, Eileen; I could not live without your love.

The war seems to go on and on, spreading every day, but still I put my trust in Pope Pius' prophecy and know that it will all soon be ended.

I think the war would have been ended long ago if there had been 50 million Irishmen in France instead of Frenchmen. They would have fought to the last man and would still be fighting all over Europe against the invaders of their native land. Fighting is in our blood - and so is foraging.

I have been in camp all day but I managed to make it quite interesting for myself. The honorable British Resident of Pahang came to have a look at our camp today and it seems this was a great honour! All I could see as I took hands with him was a tall portly man dressed in a white suit and crowned with a white-brimmed cowboy hat which carefully shaded a large oval puffy face and its fair baby complexion! Am I very critical Eileen? Anyhow this is a very accurate description of the honourable gentleman. He is divorced from his wife as most Europeans are in Malaya but that does not prevent her father from living with the Resident! This grand old chap is 90 years of age and invariably has the same story of what he told Baldwin in '35 and what he told Prince Konoye in '38!! Yet people think this old buffer the greatest bore in all Malaya! I medically inspected 150 men this afternoon but alas they did not mean medical work for me - it is all a routine and not very interesting. This evening I organised a party of men and together we made a new basket-ball ground among the rubber trees. Later I hope to have a small hockey and football pitch too. The men love games and do appreciate what is being done for them in camp in the sports line. They have now got volley ball, basket ball, foot-ball, hockey, badminton, tennis-quoit etc, so they are not badly off at all - in fact they have many more games than any other unit in this district. Of course this is because I am the sports officer!!! I am still very modest! After midnight mi' Lady and I went away to my dreams. Good night and God bless you my dearest one.

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 5th - Eileen, my own darling, I must tell you some wonderful news quickly because I am very thrilled about it and I only hope it will thrill you half as much. A few short weeks after receiving this letter you will, please God, be wearing a very lovely plain gold ring which has three beautiful diamonds in it! It is our ring darling - our engagement ring and though I have only seen a picture of it I know that it will be a nice one. You must promise me to send it back if you do not like it and have it changed for another one; if you would like to have it altered in any way please do so, Eileen. If you wish to have a miniature inscription put on the inside you may have it. I know that God will not allow 1941 to end without your ring safely on your finger. Of course you will have it blessed, my dearest one, and when you are putting it on your finger please shut your eyes and dream for that moment that I am beside you - you have agreed to this already. My darling, I do want you to love this ring; it means so much to us - it symbolises our betrothal, our great love, and a promise that will never be broken. Wear it always, Eileen, and then I shall know that there is one more tie between us, though we could not have been closer together than in these past months. I am so very excited about this news and I almost feel as if I were awaiting the arrival of a ring and not you! I have arranged all the details about delivering the ring to you and the conditions in which it will be sent (changed if required). Let me know immediately it arrives; I shall not rest until it is safely on your finger. I shall put it on for you again when I reach home again - and that will be very soon now. My own dearest one I do love you so very very much tonight because this is surely a mile stone in our lives; to night we have been united more closely than ever before. I could never love anyone but you, Eileen; you have always come first and you always shall. Nobody else seems to exist in this world except you; I live for you my dear Eileen, and you alone.

All your letters have reached me safely, thank God; and the latest one was written from Killarney on 20th August. You have been so thoughtful and good to me during these long months of waiting; you have written too often to me - you should have been enjoying your holiday instead of writing to a useless fellow like me. You have made my exile so very sweet and happy; I often wonder what right have I to be so happy in this sad world and living under such conditions. I owe you so much, Eileen, and yet all I can give you in return is my love and my devotion for all of my life. I shall never grow tired of giving where you are concerned. I am all yours and I shall always love you no matter what happens.

Yet another day in camp but thank God it was a busy one. I had grand fun with the men at a basket ball match this evening - they won this game above the others. Then I had a long walk in the woods all alone but not quite alone because you were there too in those leafy glades by my side as I strolled along. I sang all our Dangal songs - at least I attempted to sing them - "Cnuic a Ghlas na h-Eireann", "Is Gnáth no Chroidhe in Eis Connail astoir". They brought me back again to Ranafast and to you, my darling. How I loved those Ceilidhes, the dancing, the music, and the songs. Somehow ever since my Ranafast days I have always preferred Irish dancing to English - for sentimental reasons and other reasons too. I thought that they brought me nearer to you, Eileen, and to our first meeting at a Ceilidhe. Are you very annoyed that I should still prefer Irish dancing; I know you like ballroom dancing. However you shall not be deprived of this pleasure because we shall attend various dances during the year.

There is a big day outside camp to-morrow and though it starts at 6 am it will be a day of fresh air, sunshine, sea breezes, and a swim - not to mention a grand trip in an open tender along the Sands. Did you know that there is

how did Guy Fawkes Day? I read in the paper today of a very brave Catholic Bishop in Germany who denounced the Nazis and their crimes against innocent Catholic clergy and nuns. He knew it would mean the concentration camp for him but he did his duty as a Catholic and oh it made me so proud to belong to the same religion as such a man. Good night and God bless you, Eileen.

THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 6th - This morning I was up with the dawn at 6 a.m.; to-morrow it will be at 5.30 a.m.! My day was spent on a picturesque tropical shore and so you may guess how pleasant my work was. We were out doing an anti-malarial survey of the proposed site for the new holiday camp and selecting likely places for water supply. At noon we made a picnic of it though we only had sandwiches and fruit. We had a dip before lunch and oh my darling it was heavenly. There I was on the most perfect beach in all the world and everything around me was beautiful and unspoilt. There was an amazing swell on the water and waves of 10 ft high were pounding on the shore. When I looked up at them I realised how mighty the sea is, especially when I was tossed about like a cork (me and my 12 st 10 lb!). Then I swam out a bit beyond the waves and found myself, one moment on the peak of a swell and the next moment in an abyss looking up at the mountain of water ahead of me. I have never had such fun in the water; will you mark the 6th of November down in your diary and remind me to tell you all about it when we meet again because there is no space in a letter and because I love you. I loved you in a very special way to-day - much more than yesterday. What would I do without you to guide me always Eileen? How have I existed without your love during all these years? I have an awful confession to make to you my dearest one and I hope you will understand it. I have always loved you, Eileen, but never once in the past did I have any wish to tell you about my love, never once did I have any wish to kiss you. I had put you on

that very high pedestal; I thought that no one must ever kiss you - you were so good; I felt that it would spoil everything. I lived in a romantic world of my own and I put you as high as my ideal; You are still away up above me and you are still my ideal. I shall never change my opinion of you, Eileen; you will always be adored by me and I shall always consider that you are too good to be kissed. This may sound strange my darling but it only shows the respect and regard I have ever held you in apart from my love entirely. I think that the word "respect" describes what I want to express to you; it is vital to my love and opinion of you and it is vital to our future happiness when we are married. I shall not kiss you indescriminately and yet you shall not have cold duty kisses - each kiss will be holy and sacred to us and will always be an expression of our great love. Oh why am I worrying you about kissing and making you blush! When two people love each other as we do Eileen, kissing is so very unimportant; the things we give and the things we do for each other are more important to us and can bring untold happiness. I shall spend my life doing things for your sake; I shall never tire of giving all for you because it is a source of constant joy to me.

To morrow I have to spend in the new holiday camp site "water divining". The engineers are going to look for water in the ground and I have to examine the water. I am looking forward to my day by the sea; it always passes too quickly and I am happier out of camp than within. Never worry about me, Eileen, because, I am happy, I am very healthy, and I am safe; I love you with all my heart and soul; and I take good care of myself (and my Soul). How do you honestly think that any man could ask for more, having received all the above blessings! And now you will be glad to hear that I am about to have my first holiday in Malaya! The C.O. has planned a week-end visit to a small town

about 50 miles along the coast. He has invited four of us to accompany him. The journey will almost entirely be made along the shore, we start out at midday on Saturday and are due to return on Sunday evening. We are to stay at the local Rest House for our week-end. It will be a welcome change for us; and changes are very necessary very often in Malaya! You shall hear all about it in my next letter. So good night and God bless you till to-morrow!

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 7th :- What a glorious day I have had out in the fields by the sea-shore with half-dozen sepoys. The day began in darkness and in rain, but by 7 a.m. it had cleared up. Boring in the ground for water can be very exciting and it reminds me of "diggin' for gold", but it is hard work for the men. Our operations for the day finished at 2 p.m. and then we seven had a wonderful bathe in the sea. The men had never seen a sea like that before, with its huge waves breaking on the shore. We all held hands and went forth to meet the giants coming in from the sea. Each wave scattered us like ninepins, and after the last submersion I had to carefully count the six black heads around me and make sure that none were missing! We were the happiest men in all the world as we played around in the waves. I did not have a swim to day as I could not leave the men for a moment - I was responsible for their safety. The men are always thinking of home (all exiles do) and when they saw land in the distance across the sea they immediately asked if that were India. It was really part of the Malay coast but as it pointed north east I told them that Japan was away out there and that India was away behind us to the north west. I drove the large 30 cwt. lorry all the way back to camp, over sand, and creeks, and tiny bridges, and a two-planked ferry, and bumpy roads to home without a mishap. We were tired and hungry, but we were happy and glad to be home again. My dearest one, you were in my thoughts the whole day long. As usual

X

I wanted to share all my joys with you. I was happy with these simple Indian men today - happier than I could ever be with kings and princes. It is good to hear the merry laugh of men like these and see them smile as they emerge from under each thunderous wave! They laughed at me and with me; and I did the same to them. If I had been a proper British officer I would have dutifully watched the men from afar and not mingled with them at all, but alas I am human and cannot be distant to these good men. They really are grand soldiers too. There is a certain Indian regiment stationed here at present and I am quite sure that if they should ever go into battle they would not yield an inch of ground but would willingly fight to the last man.

Everything is now laid on for our big week end and how it depends upon the weather! I have arranged the rations, the cook, the cookee, and the servants. To-morrow night should find me writing to you twenty miles away from home, but I shall be loving you even more than I love you to-night my own darling. Won't you please come and see me for Christmas! You would have heaps of time during your vacation! I am not worth it, Eileen, nor am I worthy of the great love which you have for me. My eyes are beginning to close - Good night and God bless you, my own dear Eileen.

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 8th It is 10.30 P.m. and I am sitting on the window sill of my bedroom in the Rest House at Kuala TRENGGANU.... A few yards in front of me I can see a small pier; beyond is a broad tropical river and the moon is shining on its still surface; the sea is about 2 miles away since I can see the intermittent flashes of the local light house from its perch on the headland beyond. It is a strange place in a strange land and is just like a small town away up the Mississippi(?)! I love seeing places that I have never seen

before. It is in such a spot that I have always wanted to wander - barrier streets, grass houses raised up from the ground on stilts, a strange people. There is only one European living here and they say he has "gone native" (whatever that means). Hey Darling, I wish you could have been with me this evening as I strolled through this little town, you would have felt like an explorer discovering a new land, you would have seen what you have only read about in books. I dont know why we have come here at all; the others dont like it but I think its all grand. Most polite visitors to this place would not dream of sitting on the steps of the Rest House in the evening before dinner but that's what you Frank did at 8 p.m. when he discovered that this was the coolest spot in the building! The natives thought it quite unusual and could not quite understand it! So here I sit in the moonlight 50 miles from camp and I am thinking of you and loving you with my whole heart and soul. I would quote Lorenzo (Shakespeare) and say to you "On such a night....." I am so very happy that I could even live here in this spot and wait for you and never grow weary or bored. This place must be the most isolated on earth - it can only be reached by river and is almost completely cut off from civilization. It took us eight hours to reach it - 50 miles in 8 hours! The first 30 miles was flowers, swampy sandy beaches, sea breezes, and huge waves on the shore, tiny creeks to cross, several one car ferries. Then came 20 miles of cart track through open fields and ditches, with never a semblance of a road! But I enjoyed every moment of that trip, the journey itself, the scenery, the lunch, the punctures!, and then we came to the banks of this big river and came to a halt. We had to leave our trucks on the other side and allow ourselves to be paddled in a canoe up stream to this town. I felt that somehow it wasn't all real and that I would awake and find it all a dream, but all these dreams were really fact and I awoke to

all in such eagerness. It was like making history for me and all the time I was planning to tell you all about it; I wanted you to share it with me. And now I am dividing the spoils of my adventures along the Malay coast, but the division is very unequal because I have seen and heard it all. It is a shame you cannot be here my darling; why cannot you hear the roar of the distant sea as I can now hear it from my window. Still, I am glad you are not being taken about by mosquitoes and that you cannot feel the heat of this night on the roses (Ramadan). Your little snap is by my side and you are by my side too; I can always feel you near me, Eileen. I always feel your influence for good on me and in my life. You have made such a difference to me, darling; you have made me less selfish and more loving than I have ever been before.

We plan to leave here at 10 a.m. to-morrow morning and get back to camp early. May be there will be a letter from my best girl awaiting me and so that car will never be able to travel fast enough for my taste (we were doing 50 mph on the sands today). I will now say Good night from my own abode. I am longing to get into a real bed, in a real bedroom! God bless you, my darling.

SUNDAY - NOVEMBER 11TH - My week end is over and I am within these four black walls again! What an awful disappointment awaited me when I returned this evening - no letter from you, my darling. A whole fortnight without a letter from my beloved, and I am alive to tell the tale! I know that you have much longer than that to wait for my letters and yet you never complain. My darling, I love you so very much and I love your letters so much that it breaks my heart having to wait for them. What I need is lots of more patience and I do pray hard enough for that nowadays.

Well, my dearest one my glorious trip into Irangane is ended and I enjoyed every moment of it. When I left you last night I crept on to that lovely soft bed and soon I was asleep — and did not waken till 8 a.m. This is a disgraceful hours for me to get up at; 7 a.m. is my latest rising hour. It was raining hard but I was happy and sang my rebel song "The Wild Rover". From my window I watched the small canoes flying up and down the Great river; then came a paddle steamer and oh how I wanted to jump aboard. There and then I decided to spend some leave at this place and explore the river by steam boat and motor boat. I cannot imagine anything more exciting. After breakfast we decided to push off for home, but we first departed I bought 3 rattan belts for my best girl. They are made of coloured straw (rattan) interlacing each other; they are very cheap and you probably will not wear them but they are made by the local natives under the guidance of the Irangane Arts and Crafts people. Soon our little canoe was shooting down the river towards the far bank where lay our trucks. I made friends with the local lads of the village there and played a strange game with them. We stood in a circle and a hollow basket like ball was kicked from one man to another without it ever touching the ground! I was quite good at it even though a beginner. We had a grand send off from the village by all the inhabitants.

The journey back was grand and variety was added to the trip by one lorry being bogged in the muddy track. However we towed it out successfully and we were off again. Need I tell you that I waved to all the children on the way and they were terribly pleased — and so was I. We had a picnic in the bush at 1.30 p.m. and there waves were bigger than ever before; a small lunch at 2 p.m. and back to camp at 5 p.m. I still think I was the only one of the party to enjoy the whole trip. The others worried about the roads

about our tracks and the food – I wormed about settling. I scared them a bit coming down the river in the canoe by rocking the boat from side to side a little. Before leaving the rest house at Kemanan I read an article by Dean Inge in the Spectator; it was a very bitter attack on the Catholic Church but I found that it made me love my religion even more than before and be so very proud of it. The poor Dean does not realize the good he is doing and its a pity all Catholics cannot read his article.

My own darling, my diary for the week has ended and soon I hope and pray that it will make you half as happy as I have been in posting it to you. You know that I am all yours; that I love you above all else in the world and that I shall love you forever and ever. Eileen, my dearest one, nothing can change me because I am yours for aye. I am longing for your next letter and the news of Felix's wedding – it is now mid-November and I have not yet heard what happened to you after August 20th. Did mammie ever receive my letter? I sent it to St. Josephs in Killarney and I hope it reaches her safely. I had a telegram from New Delhi today from a Major Fegan wishing me a happy birthday. I know Jim Fegan very well in Rawalpindi when I was A.D.C. to his uncle. He is of Irish descent of course!

I shall see you soon my darling and I mean this. We must send me back to you quickly now that the war is nearly over. May God bless you, Eileen, and may He keep you safe from all harm. May Mary our Mother keep you ever under her protection for

Yours loving

Frank.

P.S. Love to all and Frances

D.