21st Field Ambulance,
C/o Base Postal Depot,
Bombay,
Sunday, August 5th,

My dearest Eileen,

Will you please have a careful look at the stamps on this letter and take note of the change. I arrived here yesterday amid a flourish of trumpets and much flag-waving! I have told you all about it in the letter which I sent to you this morning – another boring letter of 12 pages of very random jottings! I am still reading your letter which arrived yesterday and I am still gazing at you in the snaps. You now hold pride of place in my wooden hut as you stand above my table heavily laden with your golf trophies and clubs. It is good to bid you 'good morning' when I step out of bed at 7a.m.; you are there to greet me at 1 p.m. and when I return again at dusk, hot and weary, you can still give me a smile of encouragement. May be some day you will greet me in person when day is done and then all my cares and worries will disappear like magic. Eileen darling you mean such a terrible lot to me – I could not ever live without your love now that I have found it. Being so far away from home is awful but you can never know what it means to me to know that you love me – it can bring such consolation and it can make me ready to face anything that the future may hold for me in India or elsewhere. Am I telling you a very big official secret when I mention that I hope to have a swim in the China Sea this week end sometime! You may as well start praying that the sharks will not get me, because I have an awful habit of showing-off in the sea by swimming away out far beyond the other lads. Do not

be alarmed my darling – I shall not take any risks, in fact I must always be careful for your sake. However you must be prepared to see me toiling up and down on the Atlantic waves at Bundoran some fine day, very far from the shore! I refuse to listen to any lectures, Miss O'Kane!

I am sorry to disillusion you, Eileen, but your Benjamin Log is not quite fair in describing my beloved Perak. Both of my previous stations were in Perak and it was a glorious state in every way and much more fascinating than the very hot and artificial Penang which I have seen once. I have never been to Singapore as yet and so I cannot pass judgement on it but I imagine it is overcrowded – I know it is the most sticky place in the whole of the Malayan Peninsula. I have sent you snaps all taken in Perak and surely you must have noticed how lovely it was. How I wish I were back again in that state in my mountain den among the trees – and I am not alone in my musing. The others are restless in this place and a very different spirit prevails here than what I noticed at my last station. I cannot tell you any more about this news. The new major has not assumed his high office and I have not relinquished my crown as yet, but alas it is inevitable. I know that whatever is to come that I can meet it with courage in the knowledge that I have always done my best and hope that I have always tried to do the right thing. I spent the day 'settling in' and so to night I am writing to you as if I had been in this place for many moons! I am quite accustomed to moving about the world now and hundreds of miles mean very little to me. I visited the local town today and made some purchases for the mess – otherwise we would have starved to night! There are now 13 in our mess but not all are doctors and I was planned today at the mess meeting to hand over the job of Secretary to someone else, though I have agreed to remain on for another two

trades. I just haven't got any time for it - and it is a full time job in itself.

Will you please thank Felix very much for the welcome he intends giving me when I become one of the family. Need I tell you that I could not have a better brother than he - you must know that so well.

Good night and God bless you, Eileen.

WEDNESDAY - AUGUST 6th:- I forgot to tell you that I made some discoveries in the local town yesterday (it is not really a town!). I was in a small newspaper shop ordering papers for the month when I spied a beautiful little statue of the Blessed Virgin and then I spotted a picture of the Sacred Heart. The proprietor of course was a Catholic and he gave me all the details about Mass in this part of the world. My darling, there will not be Mass here again until Christmas! It is just too terrible to think about it. Do you ever realise how lucky you are, Eileen? Please think of me and pray very hard for me each time you go to Mass. How I wish that I had gone much oftener when I was at home and in India. My newspaper man has promised to let me know when the priest is due to arrive here; he has also promised to write to Singapore for a small statue for me. I have arranged with him to-day to get a copy of "Oriental Travellers Gazette" for me; I want to send it to you because it is so interesting - especially an article on Malaya describing in detail my first station and district in this peninsula. To day I bought three copies of a monthly magazine - "Asia" - and they are all for you. It is an American journal and I knew you will be interested in all the articles and pictures. I hope they will all reach you safely because I want you to have them - and they will increase your store of knowledge about the East.

You can never realise how very far away I am now from Civilization - about 200 miles from the nearest Good-Sized town (as big as Portsdown!).

My present abode is not so pretty as my last station but there are nice spots on the road to the local town (village I mean!). I have not seen the China Sea as yet – that is a treat in store for us. Life is not very congenial for us at the moment and more I cannot say – you must redouble your prayers for me that God may direct me in what I should do. You know that the situation in the Far East is very tense just now, Eileen, but a war is my job at the moment and I shall try to do my bit. I only need God's grace and your love to carry me through anything. We shall meet again soon and that thought I always keep before my mind, because it keeps me alive. It will be grand to meet all your people and all your relatives – I shall love them as much as you do. It will be quite an ordeal for me and I know how particular they all will be about their Eileen's choice of husband; it would be awful if they found me wanting and not quite up to standard. You will become very unpopular with the Clan O'Caisáin if I should not be up to Scratch!

I am very glad that you are having a good time at home – Golf, tennis, dances, and pictures etc. I want you to be so very happy no matter where you may be or what you may be doing. Will you be very sad when you have to give up your beloved teaching? I know how much you love your job and how difficult it will be for you to break away from it; I shall do my best to compensate you for your loss. My poor Eileen, you have no idea of the awful time you will have being married to a lad like me – he may not even be able to afford to keep a servant!! You know how much I love you and that you shall have everything that I can possibly give to you. Have you ever tried to picture us visiting Mr. & Mrs. Leland (I don't know the surname)? Maybe we shall all visit old Castlemallan again together and re-live those happy days again. The McCabbs were grand people and very generous to me on many occasions. Do you remember the

night I stayed at their house and upset the whole household! I wondered to myself then "Will she ever love me?". I think you shared a room with Frances that night and the noise you made was terrific – not to mention your snores during the night. I said my usual Good night and God bless you there too.

THURSDAY – AUGUST 7th – I was terribly disappointed this evening, Eileen, when I had a phone message from the village saying that there was a telegram awaiting me there and would I please come and get it! As it was after 7 p.m. I could not go because the place is 10 miles from here and no military vehicles are allowed out after that hour. I know that that telegram must be from you and so I have to sit here and wonder what it contains. If only I could have it to-night how happy I should be but I must be patient and wait till the morn' arrives. I love you so very much to-night and I need your love as I have never needed it before. Some day you will know how happy you have made me in my exile by your letters, your love, and your prayers. I shall just have to spend my days planning ways and means of making you the happiest wife in all the world – it's the very least I can do. Is it an awful thought for you to have to change your name from 'O'Hare' to plain, ordinary 'Murray'? I think you had better start rehearsing for our big day; will you be terribly nervous? You will find in me a very calm and collected partner! How could I ever be shy or nervous with you right beside me. I have written ages ago to you asking what preference you have for an engagement ring and what your size is. Please let me know soon, my dearest, because I want you to show the world that you really are engaged. Do not think that I want you to make an exhibition of it to all and sundry – you could never do that. I shall manage to have a ring sent to you somehow unless I am mixed up in a war in the Far East. If a war should start in these parts you will have to

begin praying really hard for me. There are so many things I have to tell you when I reach home again that it will take years for me to tell them all to you - they are things that must not be written down on paper while the war is still in progress. Then there will be so much to tell about my love for someone whom I have loved since the first day I saw her in Ranafast so many years ago and whom I have loved ever since then.

Today I was out doing some work far from the camp and my road led to the China Sea. As the truck rounded a bend on the road I suddenly saw the sea and it was a welcome sight to these eyes of mine because I love the sea. Maybe that's why it looked more lovely than I have ever seen it before and yet the China Sea is the same as any other sea - it is wild and untamed and has a splendour all of its own. If you had seen the beach today and its thousands of graceful palms along the edge, you would have marvelled at all this beauty. I saw the ships that go down to the sea and many strange craft were there from tiny Chinese sailing boats to large tramp steamers. I could not leave that sight for ages. I went down to the beach and walked on the sands. As usual it made me think of you and what you might be doing at that very moment. I hoped that all had gone well with your plans to spend August at Killaugh with your dear ones all united together. What will they say when I arrive in Ireland to join this happy family?

I had three sea-mail letters today and all three were medical (B.M.A. etc). I had hoped for so much more from home but nothing came but all my letters come by Air mail and so I should not have fostered such expectation. However it is thrilling awaiting a new post even though it brings little. May your next letter come soon - that is always my wish. And now I

must bid thee good night. God bless you.

FRIDAY - AUGUST 8th I never knew until today how much I really love you, Eileen. Your telegram - a very long one - came this morning. I rushed off to town early this morning and collected it. I have been too happy for words today and now to night I am sending you all the love and joy that is in my heart. I can now make arrangements at last to have your engagement ring sent; it will take time to reach you, so you must not expect it to arrive soon. You see I have to write to a big firm in Bombay called Mappin & Webb who head Office is in London. They will arrange to send you a selection of Gold Diamond rings of your size L 1/2 (this is correct?) from London. How I wish with all my heart that I could place that ring upon your finger; alas I shall not even see it until I return home again. Maybe we could do it all over again then, and have a Celebration as well! Maybe we shall be too busy preparing for our wedding. If only I could make you as happy as I am; I owe all my happiness to you and so you must have everything that I can give you in return. I should be quite miserable in my present station as many others seem to be - the climate is horrible; there are swamps all around us, millions of mosquitos, the atmosphere is depressing - but I am quite the opposite. I am no longer Second-in-Command of the Field Ambulance because there is another Major Sahib now and he is senior to me and as there can only be one Major in a Field Ambulance, I shall fall from my exalted position and be humbled in the dust! And still I can feel happy - that is the amazing part of it. I do have my bad moments, but I have only to think of you and all my sadness has gone. I want to give you all the details of how hard I have worked, my success with the men, and our good show in the Field, but you must wait, my darling, to hear it all from me. You see, Eileen, I was specially selected for this job when I was in India

and I knew in my heart that I have always justified my selection (said he, boastingly!) and now I have been replaced by accident by another Belfast Officer! I am sorry Eileen, to have unburdened all of this on to you.

I am eagerly waiting to hear details of your visit to my sister Una in Dublin. Tell me, Eileen, did you like her? I know she will love you because she knows a lot about character and because we have always been so very dear to each other. I did tell you once about the lectures she gave me long ago about love. Some people do not like her very much, but I have always loved her just a little bit more than my other sisters. She and I were considered the two "black sheep" of the religious Murray family! It is grand to meet a nun with a real vocation and see how happy she can be. When are you meeting my father and the others at home? You will find Beechwood a large, cold, and neglected house. I had made many plans to have it fixed up and decorated properly but the war put an end to all plans. Maybe some day we shall find ourselves together in "Beechwood" - who knows? It was my father's great ambition to keep it for me and my wife and have a practice in Belfast.

I have ferreted out another wonderful magazine from the local village "Straits Times Annual 1940"; it's a year old but it makes very interesting reading about Malaya and the surrounding lands. I shall send it off as soon as possible, with the "Asia". And I know you will delve into them thoroughly. We are still settling down in our new camp and so no serious attempt has been made yet to do real work. I am kept busy enough with the mess and my medical equipment to pass the time away! Do you realise that it is now midnight and I must snatch some sleep before dawn! God bless you and good night.

SATURDAY - AUGUST 9th :- Young woman, do you remember writing me a letter on 7th May 1941 as you sat in bed and addressing it to Army Headquarters, New Delhi ?? Well, my darling, it has arrived this evening and it is the most wonderful letter that I have ever read in all my life. It was your first love-letter to me and I shall treasure it above all else as long as I live. I have only read it three times during the past few hours! You almost put me to shame when you tell me how much you love me and how you even cried when writing about it. You must never weep again, Eileen, unless it be for joy because you will never have any cause to be sad. We were both children in the old days and I, too, was terribly afraid of you and my heart had quite palpitations when I met you! We have always loved each other and we were always meant for each other. God had his own plans for us and surely His way of bringing us together was the right way as we now love each other as He has always meant us to. The mental anguish and uncertainty you have had must have been awful and I was the cause of it all. I must have been blind when I was in England not to have seen that you loved me even though you never once mentioned the word love to me. If you had seen the temptations that were put in my way to get married in Birmingham - a very beautiful young lady, a bathetic, and a large practice as well - and yet I just could not love that young lady, because I loved you, Eileen. Now you have given me your love and that is all I have ever wanted in life.

I hope you have written and told me all about your travels in Donegal last month. Dr. Columban should be very proud of his magic gate - tell him that your husband will thank him and his gate personally with you some day soon! I am very willing to have you as my guide when we visit the rugged, beautiful Donegal together. May be we shall both stand hand in hand on Ramsport Strand and I shall show you where I traced a large E.O.K in those sands when I was a boy!

Please do not wear out your black frock too quickly because I want to see it and dance with you when you wear it. You shall have dancing as much as ever you wish when I return home again to you but you will have to put up with a very awkward partner who will work havoc with your dancing shoes - and pet toms! So my little Frances intends managing a de Montemeeste - well she shall have music whenever she goes! She deserves a good husband and he must be a good man if he has been passed as such by you, my darling.

When are you going to visit my little sister Anne at 'Beechwood' - she is a good child and is the Martha of our family of nuns! She will give you a royal welcome and may be she will give you some tea with my tea set which I won at Aghagallon sports so many years ago! May be she will introduce you to our two Mercy nuns at Grandin Road - Maureen and Margaret - both are older than I (as Una also is!). You will find them much different from Una. Maureen is the elder and is a real Rev. Mother already; Margaret can do anything - she is witty and clever; she acts the clown at all the Convent plays; and you should hear her playing the latest fox-trot on a piano. Maureen is a classical musician - ask her to play her Irish Diamonds selection and it will awaken all that is Irish in you.

Did you not know, Eileen, that white people get six months leave every two years in Eastern Countries and that they all make a bee-line for home - and that they love to get back to the heat again! They could never endure this climate continuously without a periodic change to cooler climes. Did you not know that the B.B.C. has got an Eastern transmission daily as well as an African service, an Overseas service, a North American service etc etc. And that these services continue during the night whilst you are peacefully asleep in

bed. So we in Malaya get the news daily at reasonable hours of the day!

Today was declared a half-holiday and all the officers went off on a reconnaissance to the coast. I saw the China Sea this afternoon through waving palm trees on the edge of the beach - and it was a typical South Sea Island picture. The sea was green, the sands were white and stretched for miles, the waves came roaring in thundering up a wonderful white foam, the sky was blue and the sun was hot, but a faint breeze was heaven sent. We went down to the beach armed with swimming suits and towels and though the others were quick I was the first into the waves and diving into those mighty breakers! I swam out far beyond the breakers where there was no surge and where I could glide up and down with the swell of the tide. It is heaven to be poised on top of a large wave just before it breaks and then to swim down into the deep ships behind it. I love the sea and I shall never fear it - this part of the coast is not shark infested! As I was away out in my beloved sea, I thought of you, my darling, but I must not repeat the words I said to you - you have heard them too often already! I must take lots of snaps so that you can see all the beauty that I can see here. You would have gazed at the red sunset and the tiny canoes silhouetted against the sky.

I don't deserve to be so happy. God bless you, Eileen.

SUNDAY AUGUST 10th - Another letter from you today my dearest! You wrote it just before going to Strabane and now it has arrived a week after your Strabane letter! How can you be so cruel to give me so much happiness - Yes, my darling, it almost hurts to be so happy. When I read your letters I feel that you are talking to me and that you are really sitting by my side; you tell me all the little things that I long so much to hear - your home, your thoughts, your games, your friends, your family, and all the little things that happen to you. I love reading about your

middle shade, and the curls; your new frocks - but now alas your poor clothes are rationed and you have to patch things up. You know that I shall always love you no matter whether your stockings are all darned or not! Please write to me the same letters always, they bring you so very near to me and that 7,000 miles of separation means nothing to us.

I have so much to write to you tonight that I shall have to risk sending this letter overnight - this day has been a very important landmark in my military career. The news came in by telegram just before dinner that Major Murray will proceed forthwith to a new job in another part of Malaya. I was glad of the news and again I was very sorry. My position in this Field Ambulance was almost unbearable and you can understand why and if you cannot then my dearest you will have to wait till the war is all over before I can tell you about it! My O.C. is mad with rage about losing me but he has only himself to blame and he is powerless to stop the move. I am going back to the same part of the country from whence I have just come, but to-morrow you shall have full details.

My dearest I have had a marvellous day on the beach - from 12 noon till 6 p.m.. I know it sounds bad having such fun with the war threatening Malaya, but we had to do some scouting around this morning. Five of us had a swim before lunch and oh it was grand to be alive in that sea. I swam out about a mile - while the others had a duck time with both feet on the bottom in shallow water - they student knows what they were missing! A glorious Kela lunch under the palm trees made us contented with life in general. After coffee we rested in the shade and then came a very Homeric game of "Cricket" among the palms. The bat was the branch of a palm tree and the balls were empty coconut shells (outer covering). I should mention that the ground was

Littered with coconuts. Your Frank was in good form and smashed the ball all over the place. At the end of 20 minutes hard work I had to retire unbeaten. Then some natives climbed up to the top of a tree and cut down some fresh coconuts and each of us had a pint of milk from inside them. Of course these are young nuts and the contents make a delicious drink. My camera has been busy all day snapping the palm beach and the waves. I should have some grand snaps to send to you very soon, Eileen. We had another swim at 4.30 P.m. and it was even better than the first. If only you had been swimming with me towards that lovely beach and could have seen a red sunset behind the palms you would have said how perfect it all was. It would have been perfect for me if you had been there with me.

It is already tomorrow – 12.30 am! My dearest you know that I am all yours and always shall be yours. I try very hard to love you more than I do, but alas I cannot squeeze any more love from this poor heart of mine – you have all the love that is within me. May God bless you, Eileen, and may His Holy Mother guard you and protect you.

Ever and forever yours,

Frank.