27th Field Ambulance,
c/o Base Postal Depot,
Bombay,
Sunday, 11th September

My dearest Eileen,

I am still reading your wonderful letter (dated 3rd July) which arrived yesterday. Why oh why do you love me at all; what you could ever see in me I do not honestly know. You are many thousands of miles away from me and yet you have made me the happiest man in all the world by just telling me that you loved me. This endless waiting must end soon, my dearest, and then when we do meet again we shall know happiness that no couple has ever known before. I do love you Eileen with every bit of my being - you have all my love and you have all of me. I shall spend my life in making you happy; everything that I do is for you and it will always be for you. You know that I have always loved you and that I always shall. I belong to you and never will even the smallest of my thoughts belong to anyone but you. Poor Eileen, you have only got me and my love; and I have got you and your love - you have got the worst of the bargain! I shall try to love you even more than I do now and I shall try to improve myself and pray harder than ever that God may make me worthy of you. I shall pray to Him to-morrow morning at Holy Mass and Communion - I shall offer up two Masses for you my own dear Eileen that God may bless you and bless our love, that He may bring us together soon again and make our married life all that He wants it to be. It is wonderful to have two Masses to-morrow, two on Tuesday, and two on Thursday. The priest is having his quarterly tour of the district. I shall pray harder this week than I have ever prayed in my life before - You will have six Masses and three Holy

Communion all to yourself. My dearest, I have to give you everything good that I have even though I am not as good as you.

I shall get up at 5 a.m. to-morrow and Tuesday mornings and at 4.30 a.m. on Thursday; that is nothing when Mass is available - I would do a great deal more than that to hear one Mass. The small wooden chapel is in the village 11 miles away - with a ferry in between - that why I have to get up so early. My poor Batman had an awful shock when I told him to-night that I wanted hot water at 5 a.m. to-morrow morning! There is a war on, young woman, and you are working hard at Omagh - I, the soldier, spent my day on a tropical shore picnicking with the other Officers and C.O.! I had a glorious swim in the warm sea and beat all my records for distance away out in the sea - as usual every moment of that swim was with you, my dearest. I decided that when we go swimming together at home we shall swim away out together from the shore and when we have gone far enough I shall ask you "Eileen, do you love me?" - I asked you that question to-day away out there but no reply came. After lunch the others went asleep, but I crept softly away to a quiet spot under the palms and with my hands clasped around my knees I spent a whole hour just looking at the waves and thinking of you and our future. I was sorry when the others awoke and put an end to my dreaming. My dearest Eileen, I had such grand thoughts of you - I was completely wrapped up in you.

As we drove along the beach in the big military car I thought how much this place resembled Robinson Crusoe's island - even the wild goats were there too. It is all very lovely, darling Eileen, but I say again that I love you too much to think of asking you to come out here. If you were allowed to come during this war, I would never ask you to risk your life in coming out to this place - and I would never ask you to come even under peace conditions. You are much safer and better off

at home with all your dear ones around you. From the health point of view, women were never meant to live here (I mean Europeans) – not to mention white men. And yet you are willing to come; God bless you for offering even that much for me – you are ready to risk your life if I asked you to do so. How can I love you enough in return for such love and devotion.

Our Saturday night house was washed out last night, but to night was dry and so the show was staged. The acting was grand and the audience became very excited when two "maharajahs" got busy with their "swords" in a fight to the death! I meant to write to my mother to day (your mother), but alas I must go to bed with it still unwritten. I shall always treasure the little note I received from her in yesterdays letter. Good night and God bless you, my own dearest.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 15th This has been my happiest day in Malaya so far and I have loved you to day Eileen with my all – and even more than that because our Divine Lord made my love for you a very holy thing. I must first tell you all about this day of love before I forget even a moment of it. My batman awakened me at 5 am; I washed and shaved by lamplight and all the time I was praying hard. It was the beginning of a glorious day as I stepped out into the moonlight. I rushed across to the guard-room and paraded the guard – I was the orderly officer; you would have laughed if you had seen me inspecting the men and I armed with a prayer book in one hand and torch in the other. I found my little Austin and soon I was off down the road in the cool morning air before 6 a.m.. I reached the little chapel in good time 6.30 a.m. It was a lovely sight – the chapel was illuminated with coloured lights and numerous fairy lights and beautiful flowers decorated the altar. It is the native custom to have bright lights and coloured – coloured banners all around the walls and in each the picture of a Saint. Two priests sat at the altar rails wearing Cope[illegible] – one a

a little black bearded Frenchman and the other a native Malay priest. The people were mixed - half were Chinese and half Tamils (Indians), while in front of me knelt the local Irish doctor, his doctor wife, and their three beautiful flaxen haired little girls. Yes my dearest I have never prayed so earnestly in my whole life as I did during these two Masses this morning - the harder I pray the more I love you. My Holy Communion was all for you as were the two Masses. I was in an ecstacy of joy, Eileen and it is a joy that the world cannot give - I was so happy that I could have cried. I had a talk with the little Frenchman when the Masses were over and arranged with him to have a Mass said to-morrow morning at 7 am. for a very special intention of mine (it concerns you, my dearest, in fact it is all for you and your intentions). I was off again back to camp in my small car and reached the lines before 9 am. My only regret was that I had made no sacrifice to hear Mass - getting up early was too easy; I was not sleepy, I was not hungry or thirsty or tired! So where is all the merit that I should have gained by offering up these small acts ?? May be it is because I am so terribly fit that I do not feel hardships of any kind.

My whole day was one of supreme happiness and I was very close to your heart, my dearest - closer than I have ever been before. I was working away and all the time my heart was singing. But it stopped singing just for a moment to day when a Nursing Sepoy stood before me and wept. He had been away working in the Civil hospital for over a week and just come back to day - I was a Major when he went away and he found me a Captain now. He just stood there and wept, and at last I discovered what he meant "Why, oh why have they made you a Captain, Sahib? So I said "Because I was a very bad officer" He only shook his head and then suddenly straightened up and gave a very smart salute, saying "This salute only

for you, Sahib, nobody else". Small things like this happen almost daily to me and it makes me happy to think that I have still got the same love. My dearest Eileen, I do not tell you these things in a proud way, I only want you to share my happiness and to let you know that a few people here do like me. I want and love to hear of people at home loving you - everyone should love you.

Eileen my dearest, if you should discover my present whereabouts from any telegrams I may send you, you must always put the usual address on the letters you send to me. May be you do not understand this queer postal system. Your letters are all sent to a Base Post Office (Army) and in Malaya and then dispatched direct to me. I smiled at your description of the painless operation you had on your pet corn in Strabane! Thank heavens I haven't got any corns, else I should never be able to march at all. By the way, my dearest, I do wear khaki uniform - shorts and open necked shirt during the day; trousers and shirt with sleeves rolled down in the evenings. The khaki is light in colour - much lighter than you see at home - it is really sand coloured. I would like to see you in your Donegal tweeds with collar and tie - they would suit you very much. The enlarged photograph of the snap would be wonderful if you could send it, Eileen; I would prefer it to a studio photograph like the one I sent you. It was an awful thing and not a bit like me.

How happy I am that you did write to me and send me that letter last year. Wouldn't it have been awful if you had not sent it, Eileen. How could you possibly have hastened my poor mother's death to give you an excuse for writing to me. We were meant for each other and we would have found each other in the end - you merely speeded things up by hammering at Heaven's gates with all your prayers. Thank God you were given the courage to write to me and tell me

that you loved me. I sent you back a very cautious telegram - I imagined you were still a schoolgirl and might get into trouble if I even put the word love on it.

It is now 11 P.M. and I have an early start to-morrow. Good night and God bless you, Eileen.

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 16th - To-day has almost been as happy as yesterday - just one small thing rather spoiled it for me. A letter came from my father this evening (Pan-American Clipper); it was dated August 11th. I was overjoyed to have a letter from him, but when I opened it I only found one sheet of note-paper written on both sides - the rest of the letter was missing. He must have written this letter after your visit to Beechwood and the missing part of the letter must have been all about you. My dearest Eileen, I could have cried with disappointment - I wanted so much to know what father thought of you. Either he has forgotten to send the other part of the letter or else it has been removed by the Censor. Sometimes the Censor seems open your letters or father's for some reason or another.

I had my happy moments at the two Masses and Communion this morning. The little French priest was true to his word and said your Mass at 7 a.m.. I had a long chat with him outside the chapel before Mass started. I have arranged to get some Holy Water on Thursday from him; and when his leave is over he has promised to send me a statue of the Blessed Virgin. The Malay priest also had a word with me - he is a grand little man and so very proud of his faith. He thinks there must be other Catholic officers in this district, but they did not show up at Mass. He was very pleased with the bunch-load of beads I have produced each morning from this camp. I arranged with him for a Mass on Thursday morning for a special intention (your ♡ and also a happy married life for us both).

A lovely little Chinese baby was baptized this morning and your

would have seen the proud look in that little mother's face. After the second mass I found the little Frenchman seated outside the chapel surrounded by Children - he looked the picture of happiness as he sat there with his white topee, and smoking an awful looking cigar (so early in the day!). Along came the Mc Mahon (Dr.) family and I was very solemnly introduced to the three young ladies and now my Eileen I am in love with all three of them! The eldest is aged 9 and the others 8 and 7 years. It seems there are three other flaxen haired girls younger than these. They are Grand Children and very full of life - not in the least shy, in fact I was their "uncle" before we parted at the chapel gate this morning!

On my way through the village I collected my pair photographs at the Small Chinese photo shop. I am enclosing one copy of me as I appear daily on parade - all hot and bothered! The headgear is a topee or pith helmet and is a light khaki colour. You may notice that I was a major when this was taken! I fear that something went wrong with the light and shade scheme of the little man who did the job! You will soon have so many photographs of me that you will not require any wall paper if you just paste me around the walls of your room! My father mentioned that the large photograph of me had reached him safely and so I conclude that you have received yours too, Eileen. Am I not an awful sight; I was dressed in my Khaki Drill, as they call the uniform. It consists of long sleeved jacket with gilt buttons and long trousers - both light khaki colour. It is thin material and of course does not sit well, as the Khaki Serge can do. When I reach home I shall not have any more photographs taken of myself! I only send you my own self because I think it is only fair that you should see what I really look like if you love me any more.

I wrote you a short note this morning and sent you some embossed maps of the beach; it was only two pages, so please do not expect long letters

apart from my diary ones! I shall have to send you another telegram to-morrow as I haven't had a reply yet from the other three; I am beginning to worry about you my dearest in case you are ill or have been hurt. Is it possible that I have hurt you in some way in my letters to you? My own dear one, you know that I would rather die than do this.

I wrote to my mother (our mother) yesterday evening but alas I could not post the letter this morning as I came back too late from Mass. However my four four pages will be sent flying all the way to her to-morrow morning. I have addressed it to St. Joseph's, Killough - is that correct, Eileen? I also wrote to Humphrey Thomson thanking him for the papers and telling him that my best girl is a very good friend and grateful patient of his pals. Did I hurt you so very much in the old days when I showed you your snap cut out of the School team? You were annoyed because your Mattie had been neglected. My dearest, I had at least two copies of that snap; besides I always kept Mattie separate and about a week ago I sent her to you. I shall send you the snap with this letter if I can remember. I do forget things and in to-days diary I almost said Good night without even mentioning the fact that I love and adore you, my dearest. Every day of my life you will have to listen to these words. God bless you, Eileen.

WEDNESDAY - SEPTEMBER 17th - So you realise, young woman, that I have to get up at 4.30 a.m. to-morrow morning on account of you?! Your Mass will be at 6.30 a.m. - hence the early rising. I really am ashamed of myself because it is no effort at all on my part - I feel as if I am not doing enough for you and for God. I do want to do so very much more, my dearest. To-morrow will be my last two hours here until December 21st. and how I shall miss it all. Thank God you are praying so hard for me and not forgetting me on Sundays - I love you, Eileen, because you are so good

And for your own dear self.

This evening at dinner someone remarked that I should be called the happy man of the district because I am always cheerful! Yes, my dearest, it is so my love, I am the happiest man here and in the whole world. I have told you that happiness is infectious - so let us start a campaign to make others as happy as we are. I cannot help showing people how very happy I am. I had a day dream about you this evening - we were sitting in the train bound for Liverpool from London; we were side by side and you had the audacity to cling tightly to my arm in spite of the other passengers present! My dearest Eileen, it is not conventional - it is not done by young ladies!! But I loved you for it because it seemed so natural that we should sit arm in arm, and you are more natural than anyone I have ever known. Yes, I dreamed that the war was over, that you had met me at Southampton and that now we were speeding towards home - our happiness just knew no bounds. My dream ended and I found myself singing "Home, Sweet Home" and then I was sad for a moment and longed with all my heart to be home again. Then came my worrying about you - even after the post had come I was looking out for a letter or a telegram to say that all was well with you. I decided to wait another couple of days for your telegram. I know that you are in far away Omagh and cannot enquire about wires or send telegrams - you have to depend upon week ends for all of this (in Belfast). My own dearest Eileen, I should not worry about this at all but I love you so much that the very thought of anything happening to you fills me with terror - I would rather die than know that this was so.

It is now 10.15 p.m. and I am going to mine bed. If you could peep into my room just now you would see an empty bottle on the table beside me - it is for Holy Water to-morrow morning! Good night my dearest and God bless you.

THURSDAY - SEPTEMBER 18th - I am sorry about last night's short note but I had to go to bed early and so poor Eileen was neglected. Well, darling, my orderly (batman) got me out of bed this morning at 4 a.m. by mistake! So I was up in good time for Mass - 4 Mass. I set off down the road by moonlight armed with prayer book, empty bottle, and torch; a very wonderful Quarter-moon was shining above in spite of the waves of mist we met near the ground (by "we" I mean Annie and myself). We reached the ferry before 6 a.m. and I had to stand and holler across the river for 15 minutes before the ferrymen awoke and slowly approached. Meanwhile the mosquitoes were having a hearty breakfast at my expense - they just swarmed around me by the million. When I reached the chapel I found the little Malay priest pacing up and down outside in the grounds. We had a talk and he promised to send me some books, - he called the Country Doctor" (Sheila K. Smith?). He also said that he would write to me when he reached his parish again in -----

The little Frenchman was now ready to say Mass but alas the crowd was very very small indeed - a few Indians and Chinese. No troops appeared until the second Mass at 7 a.m. when a R.A.F. lot arrived accompanied by an officer - they looked very smart indeed. As usual I prayed, and prayed as if my life depended on it - and my life does depend on prayer, because this war must end soon and I must be sent home to you Quickly. Then came your Mass at 7 a.m. and oh, my dearest, if you do not become an angel after that Mass and Communion it won't be my fault! And yet I do not want you to become an angel in case you fly away from me - I could not bear to lose you, Eileen. Towards the end of Mass I noticed the French priest very busy with the small bottle in which the wine is carried. Apparently he was up to something - after Mass he rushed to greet me outside the chapel and presented me with this bottle containing Holy Water. I showed him

my own bottle already filled but he insisted that I should have both! He promised to write to me and send me the little statue. Poor Father Jerard - I wonder what his feelings are regarding France. The French priest at my last station, Fr. Bonamaye, said that it was very awkward for them all in Malaya, but I think people understand their feelings. Well, I said Goodbye to the two priests with whom I had become so friendly and off I went. I forgot to say that the local Irish doctor and his daughter were at Second Mass and Communion; I met them outside and they made me a prisoner and carried me off to breakfast at their beautiful bungalow outside the village. I met the whole family - Sheelagh, Moira, Patricia, Beddy, and Michael - all blonde with dark brown eyes and black eyelashes! I spent a very happy hour with these children - I was carefully scrutinized, cross examined, and generally tested. Then I was found to be acceptable, and admitted to their circle. These children were all over me - one on each knee, two beside me, and the baby (Mickey) on the floor. I showed them my nurse trick with a handkerchief and they were thrilled; I made a nut disappear and they thought it was really magic! They are very proud of me, they say, because I am the only Catholic uncle they have and I am an Irishman and a doctor like their daddie. Beddy (aged 4) merely remarked that she loved God who is so good and she hated the old Devil (and she pointed down below!) who is so wicked. They are all going back to school at Cameron Highlands on Saturday except Beddy and Mickey - and how they detest the very idea. I promised to come and see them at school if I were nearby at any time. I then tried to say goodbye to them but they clung to my hands and refused to allow me to go! Listen, my dearest, I do love children and I always shall. You may wonder what was happening to my work during all of this time - well, there wasn't any work in camp as all the others were going out for the day on a Scheme.

I had more time to love you, to think about you - and to

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wong about you. I have been awaiting your telegram all the day long and it has not come. I know you must have sent it and that now it is being sent by sea mail from Bombay to here! That happens quite often nowadays and it is heart-breaking. That is why you must always send letters and telegrams addressed to me in Malaya and not in Bombay, even though it is not official nor correct.

The O.C. stood for two hours at my verandah table this evening talking to me. He is a very light sleeper and hears everything and so at 4 a.m. this morning he heard my orderly passing by laden with hot water for me! So this evening he remarked - "The Mohammedans used to waken me with their Call to Prayer and I made them calls ½ mile away from the Camp so that I could not hear them; the Hindus were beating drums early on Sunday mornings and I stopped that; and now the Catholics waken me at 4 a.m. going out to Mass"! I have a long route march to-morrow morning and I must away to bed. I shall make this a 14 page letter and finish it to-morrow night. I love you, my Eileen, and I shall love you forever and ever. No matter when the war may end or how it may end, you will find me waiting for you always, loving you more and more.

Good night and God bless you, my dearest.

FRIDAY - SEPTEMBER 19th. It is 9.30 a.m. and as I sit here in my room I can hear a British Soldier playing on his mouth organ "When Irish Eyes are Smiling"; he has played "Danny Boy" and "Believe me....." I wonder can you realise how an exile feels when he hears the tunes of his native land played so sweetly. Well, my darling, he feels like a Good sheep, but alas Soldiers and men are not allowed to cry! I am thinking of a pair of Irish Eyes that I love so much and that I have always loved ever since I first saw them smiling at a Colleen Ceilidh in Ranafast. Years later I imagined that they were smiling at someone else and so I ran away - and now I have run so far away from you

my own dearest, and yet I have never been nearer to you in all my life as I am now. It may seem a bit hard that we should have found each other when I was at the other end of the world, but we can thank the Good God that it has happened. Your novena of Masses and Communions was not in vain, Eileen, and I have come to you of my own free will without any forcing. God must have arranged it all and He has ordained that it should happen as it did. Our happiness in the future will be all the greater because of the years of separation we have endured - it will more than compensate us for what we have missed. We have a love that knows no bounds; it will make us the happiest couple in the whole world because it is unselfish and because it is holy; please God it will ever remain so.

Today I spent marching under the palm trees with all the men. It was very hot, but I am accustomed to it all now and think little of the heat and humidity. We all had a swim at the end of the march and then a change of shirt when we got out of the water. I have to act as "life-guard" to all and patrol up and down the danger zone in the water - you see the men are not allowed to go out more than shoulder deep in the water and so I have to watch them carefully. They are my boys and it would break my heart if one of them should get into trouble - besides I am responsible for them all. I am going into the village tomorrow morning to inspect a battalion's medical equipment and when there I shall send you a cable - I really am worried about you my darling, and I must have news of you soon. You hold my life in your hands, Eileen; you, and you alone can make me happy and yet it is only you who could make me sad because I do not worry a bit when no news comes from other friends or relatives - I just say to myself "a letter will come some-time"! But with you, my dearest, it is so different - I start thinking of all kinds of calamities that may have overtaken you, when a telegram is overdue. By the way, Eileen, some telegrams take a week to reach Malaya.

I forgot to tell you that father is very worried about Philip. You may know that he did not get all his subjects this year again - and that happens every year. Also the reason is that he does not work and no amount of talking will make him work. My heart bleeds for poor father because it is he who is suffering. Now I wish I were at home now, Eileen; I feel so useless and helpless out here where nothing happens.

I have given up the idea of going to Singapore on leave in order to compete in the Regiland Sports. I shall tell you why when we meet again because it concerns you very much and it is only because I love you that I decided to cancel my trip to the South! Did I tell you that I were take my Vetamins A + D three times a day out of a small bottle of Allerdin? It is only prophyllaxis against colds and infections. I do not like being ill in bed - and so I am taking no chances. I have fitted up a new recreation room for the men and soon it will have lots of games and a small shop too inside. The men are very thrilled with the idea and flock to it each evening with their cards, draughts, ludo and snakes & ladders! They all refuse to call me a 'captain' and say that they will never call me that! It is very sweet of them and very loyal, but alas it is very awkward for me, but I cannot help it.

Surely you must be weary of this letter, so long and with so little actually in these 14 pages. As usual they all mean "I love you, Eileen"! I am all yours my dearest one and I shall always be yours come what may. May this letter reach you soon and may it bring you half the joy that yours letter bring to me. Give my love to mother, father, Manead, Fergus, and Eileen.

May God bless you and watch over you day and night. May His Holy Mother keep you ever near to her heart and may She bless us both and our love.

Yours loving

Frank.