

**The following letters were written during World
War II and compiled by
Dorothy McCann Collins
as a modern history of the family.**

**My thanks especially to my mother,
Cecile Nelken McCann,**

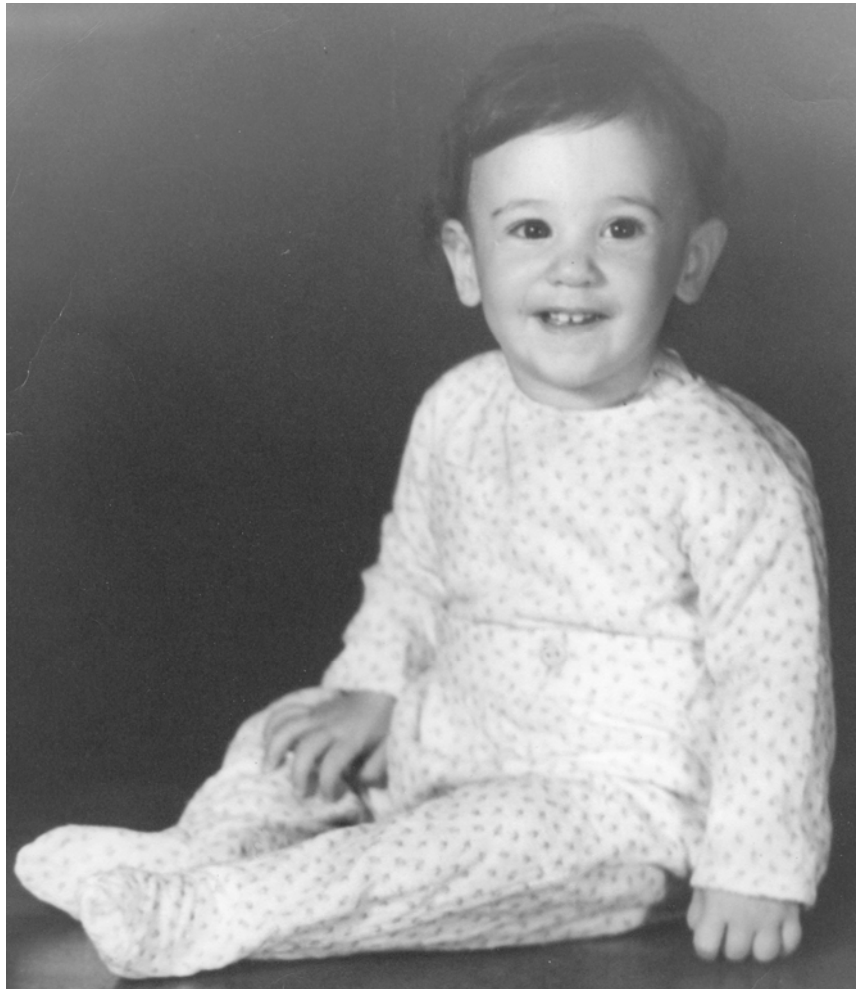
**who had the wonderful foresight to preserve
these letters, without which this history would be
impossible to create.**

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family



Father, Albert Hews McCann, Jr., 21 yrs. old

Dorothy Jane McCann Collins born 10/23/ 1937, Shreveport, LA



Dorothy Jane McCann, October, 1938, 1 yr. old



Mother, Cecile Nelken McCann, 20 yrs. old, with Dorothy McCann, Spring, 1938



Dorothy McCann, August 1939, 1 yr. 10 mos.



Dorothy Jane McCann, about 2 yrs. Old, 1940

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A.H. McCann Sr. Dorothy Brock McCann
Cecile McCann

A.H. McCann Jr. Cecile Nelken
w/Annette McCann

Dorothy McCann

Granny's parents:
William Francis Brock
Evalyn Welch Brock



Dorothy Annette 1945 Cecile Episcopal Church, New Orleans



L - R Annette McCann 5 1/2 yrs. old, Dorothy McCann, 8 1/2 yrs. old, Cecile McCann, 7 yrs. old - Year 1946

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family



Annette Hermione McCann, in bassinet, born Nov. 13, 1940, Dorothy Jane McCann, holding ball, 3 yrs. old, Cecile Leona McCann, born Feb. 9, 1939, 1 yr. 9 mos. old



1942, L-R, Dorothy J. McCann, 3 yrs. 8 mos. old Annette H. McCann 8 mos. old, Cecile L. McCann 1 yr. 4 mos. old



L - R Dorothy J. McCann and Cecile L. McCann on porch at 5340 Coliseum St., New Orleans, LA - Year 1941



1941, L-R Annette McCann held by mother, Cecile N. McCann Cecile L. McCann and Dorothy J. McCann on knees of father, A. Hews McCann, Jr.



**1941 L-R Foreground, Dorothy J McCann, 3 yrs. old, Cecile L. McCann with Father, A. Hews McCann, Jr.
L-R Background, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny) Evalyn Welch Brock (Granny's mother) holding Annette, William Francis Brock (Granny's father)**



Leona Nelken Bernhard, Cecile Nelken McCann's mother

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

Wednesday, Victoryville, CA written by Bob McCann

Dear Bud, Cil, Dorothy, Little Cil, & Annette

Surely do wish I could have made it down to New Orleans during my leave but it was just impossible to get away from the folks. Honestly you would have thought I was the only person who had ever gotten through pilot training alive, from the way they showed me off. I have never seen the folks quite as elated over anything in my life. I was "Exhibit A" from the time I got there until the time I left. It's a shame to say it but I was glad to get back to the Army where I can lead a normal life. Guess I've just been away from home life too long.

Thanks a million for the pictures you sent me, they are all perfectly swell. The only trouble with them was that they made me want to see you all the more. Incidentally they are just the right size for the folder Mom gave me. I keep the folder right here on my table, and I'm always proud to show it off to my friends and say "That's my brother and his family." Nothing you could have given me would have pleased me more, so, thanks again for a wonderful gift.

Right now I am busy getting checked out in the A J-11 which is the ship we use here for practicing bomb runs. I soloed this ship in 4 ½ hours (not a record, but good), and with a couple more weeks training I will be checked out as 1st Pilot. My job here will be to pilot Bombardier Cadets around while they are learning how to drop their eggs. This job will keep us here at Victoryville for nine months, no less, so for the first time since I volunteered??? Into the Army, I have a permanent address.

The course here is very interesting, but I won't go into detail about it. The high lights of it are – a course in bombardiering, instructions on the Martin Bombsight, drop 10 bombs, learn the Automatic Pilot, get an instrument card, become a rated pilot, and upon leaving we get our choice of bomb lines as 1st pilot. I am well satisfied with the situation and am liking it more every day.

Los Angeles is only 90 min. from here, so we get into the big city quite often. Another thing is that they encourage cross country trips so I'll be going to Frisco soon and often, I hope.

The ship we fly is very much like a Lockheed Electra, twin engine and twin rudders. The engines develop 450 hp which puts 900 hp at your disposal. I won't go into manifold pressures, rpm., etc for I don't think you would be interested, however I will say that it is really a sweet ship to fly. The Air Speed gets up to 170 mpg cruising – not bad at 10,000 ft your ground speed would be well over 200 mph. – fast enough?

Well, I must close now. Do write soon and let me know how you are coming along on your jobs, etc. Give my love to the kids. I still want to get you up in a plane Bud!!

Lots of love to you all,

Bobby

UNITED STATES ARMY AIR FORCE
ROBERT WELDON McCANN
Wednesday

Dear Dad, Al, Dorothy, Little Al, & Annette
Surely do wish I could have made it down to New Orleans during my leave but it was just impossible to get away from the folks. Honestly you would have thought I was the only person who had ever gotten through pilot training alive, from the way they showed me off. I have never seen the folks quite as elated over anything in my life. I was "Exhibit A" from the time I got there until the time I left. It's a shame to say it but I was glad to get back to the Army where I can lead a normal life. Guess I've just been away from home life too

long. Thanks a million for the picture you sent me. They are all perfectly swell. The only trouble with them was that they made me want to see you all the more. Incidentally they are just the right size for the folder Mom gave me. I keep the folder right here on my table, and I'm always proud to show it off to my friends and say "That's my father and his family." Nothing you could have given me would have pleased me more, so, thanks again for a wonderful gift.

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UNITED STATES ARMY AIR FORCE
ROBERT WELDON McCANN

Cadets around while they are learning how to drop their eggs. This job will keep us here at Victorville for nine months, no less, and for the first time since I volunteered into the Army, I have a permanent address.

The course here is very interesting, but I won't go into detail about it. The high light of it was - a course in Bombardiering, instructions on the Martin Bombaright drop 10 bombs, learn the automatic pilot, get instrument card, become a rated pilot, and upon leaving we get our choice of jobs as 1st Pilot. I am well satisfied with the situation and am liking it more every day.

Los Angeles is only 90 mi.

from here, so we get into the big city quite often. Another thing is that they encourage cross country trips, so I'll be going to Fresno soon and often, I hope.

The ship we fly is very much like a Lockheed Electra, twin engine and twin rudders. The engine develops 750 hp which puts 900 hp at your disposal. I won't go into manifold pressure, rpm, etc for now but think you would be interested. Never I will say that it is really a sweet ship to fly. The Air Speed gets up to 170 mph. cruising - not bad at 10,000 ft your ground speed would be well over 200 mph. - fast enough?

Well, I must close now. Write soon and let me know how you are coming along on your job, etc. Give my love to the kids. I still want to get you home. I love you all.
Bobby

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family



January 13, 1943, New Orleans, LA written by Cecile Nelken McCann

Darling,

Mister, I sure have missed you. Monday, I could hardly stand to come home, and ended up by talking Aunt Felicia into asking me for dinner. That helped.

Yesterday, I began to get used to it a little more, but it's still no fun.

I have your forms for a C- book But I don't now how to fill them out. When you're back you'll have to tend to that.

And your letter sounds as though you may be a way longer than you expected. I do hope you'll be back by Saturday tho. The Vaults called up and asked if we weren't going to the ballet and if we wouldn't arrange to sit with them, so I was agreeable.

What he got guaranteed seats for us – and the sixth row of the first balcony – center – and so you can see why I'm specially hoping you'll be back. The children are well. Cecile is over her cough just about, and full of devilment again. They've been saying their prayers the last few nights – ending up with a stern injunction to God to “bring Daddy back cause I miss him so much.” And then they throw you a kiss to Jackson. Cile started it - you might know.

I made my deposit in the blood bank yesterday – What an interesting procedure I'll tell you all about it when you come home. No ill affects at all afterwards, except that after trotting all over downtown when it was over, I came home, drank a glass of wine, and had a lie down and slept it off.

Cici is home today. “She went out in the rain last night and this morning her face is all swole up. She got a gum boil (from the rain) and she is in bed. I sent word that she should go see the dentist. She's probably more scared than sick. That's about all the news there is. No word from consolidated yet. I think I'll call them.

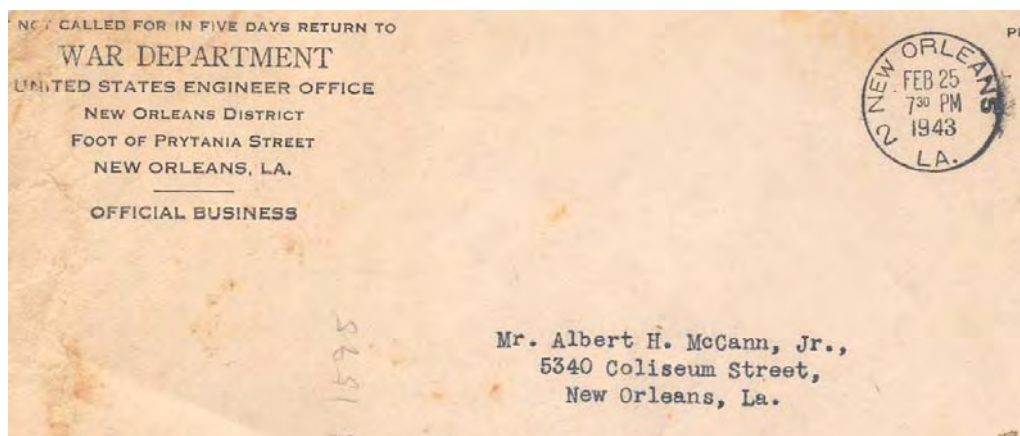
I'm so glad you're enjoying your work darling. I just wish I could be with you – but I'd probably be in the way. It must be wonderful to settle down to something at noon and be able to work until midnight undisturbed. You must tell me what it feels like.

My love, always

Cecile

Isn't dad's letter lovely? Have it, please.

Victoryville, CA written by Bob McCann



Dear Hews,

How's army life by now. You probably still don't like it, but by now you've found out that there's nothing you can do about it. By now you probably feel like a pin cushion from taking all of the shots that the army gives. I used to have fun watching the fellows pass out when they saw the needle.

I talked with a fellow

the other day who went through O.C.S. as an engineer and he says you have a very good chance of getting in. You should start operations right now though for it takes some time for these things to go through channels. With your high I.Q. and your practical experience, you should have no trouble at all. Go to your C.O. and ask for an application for O.C.S. Fill this out completely and turn it back in to him. Be sure to put in all of your education and experience, for these are two things which really count. Your C.O. will start this application through channels immediately, and later you will appear before a board which will recommend you for O.C.S. The main thing the board looks for is whether you are officer material, so talk

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straight forward and do not be afraid – another thing, be sure to report in a military manner. That's all you have to do, bud, so get started today – don't wait.

Guess mother told you that my leave has been cancelled, so I don't guess I'll see you Xmas. Surely wish I could get down there for I would like to see you Cecile and the kids; however I hope we can get together later.

Well bud, guess that's all for today. Write and let me know how you come out with your O.C.S. application.

Love,

Bobby

P.S. – Tell Cecile and the kids hello when you write.

According to Cecile Nelken (Hews' wife) Hews did not get the O.C.S. because when he appeared before the board he started crying and could not stop, he wanted the O.C.S so badly. Because of Hews' crying, the board did not think he was officer material.

6/23/1943, Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny),

Dear Folks:

My your letter was nice Cecile. I had been so hungry for one just like that for a long time. It helped to dispel the blues for Dr. Willis, Jr. had told me yesterday that I would be in bed two or three weeks more and after that he would not say as yet. Yes, I had been taking Sulphadiazine for some time and expect it had kept the infection from getting as bad as it would have been otherwise. Dr. Willis dressed my leg yesterday and took four of the five stitches out, decided to leave one in a few more days. It looks fine and the soreness is most all gone. He says the only way to get rid of this sort of thing, well, is to lie quietly and by all means keep my foot up. He is also trying to help my goiter condition. The metabolism test was 17 (it should be no higher than 4.5ml/UL in adults, see WebMD)- perhaps you know what that means, I only know it is a marked deficiency in thyroid. Well I guess when I do get out again I will be able to lick my weight in wildcats or something.

Cecile, the other day a nurse came in and said she nursed you when Dorothy was born. Said her name was Brown then – she is now married and has a little girl. She wanted to know all about you and was surprised to hear about you having three little girls now.

Daddy (Papa) is going to try to get your tomatoes off tomorrow. He picked all he had Monday and took them to Clark and Grace and they canned them on the shores in their pressure cooker. Last week he was giving them away to friends but from now on will be able to save them.

Poor Dad (Grandpa Brock) he has been so alone, I will be glad to get home on his account as much as anything. He said last night he could now understand why a man would marry again after loosing his wife for it sure knocks the props out from under a fellow.

I am so happy that my pictures are on the way. I am going to have Daddy bring them out and place them on the dresser so I can look at them all the time. Bobby had his picture taken while here and I am hoping it is finished too so I can have it here. I will send one to you when I get them.

The children must have felt proud and happy over the little sun suits. Would love to have seen them as they put them on and admired them. There is a cute pattern in today's paper that I am tempted to send for – it is a dress and pinafore – I might get to sew a little after I go home.

The doctor says he thinks Grandma will be able to see out of one eye to get around. Clara was telling me that he does not predict total blindness which is something for which to be thankful.

Well I am tired so will close for this time.

Love to all of you, Mother.

After supper and Daddy just brought your pictures. I wish I could put into words my joy at seeing all your sweet faces. It sure made me feel like a well person. They are all so good and I am so proud of them. Thank you many many times. Daddy put a box of tomatoes in the express this evening and we are hoping they will be delivered to you tomorrow. Let us know how they are when they get there and we will try sending more. Dad said you called last night and he was so glad to talk to you.

Love,

Mom

6/25/1943, Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

My Dear Children:

I have reached the point where I almost talk out loud to each one of you as I look at your pictures. They are so life like that I can most feel your presence. Last night (in my dream) I was on the train and it stopped at a little station and there you were – it seemed you lived across the road from the station and the children were playing in the yard when I first saw them. Surely wish I could accept your invitations and spend part of my recuperating time with you but I am afraid to try it.

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Dr. Willis dressed my leg again today and removed the rest of the stitches. It is doing fine, soreness nearly all gone. He cautioned me again about staying off my feet so off my feet I shall stay.

Bobby called home Wednesday night and talked to Daddy. He had been to Oakland last weekend and given the ring to Mary. He said the Walters smile upon him with favor and seemed to be in perfect accord with the affair. They are anxious for us to visit them which of course is not to be thought of at present. I think they should come to Louisiana and get acquainted with all of us, don't you?

Grandma and Clara were just here to see me. They were admiring the pictures. Everyone who sees them thinks your family is mighty fine. I agree but have feelings for my little family that words cannot express. Clara was telling about Earl's wife writing home about some of the boys in Bobby's class. The married boys and wives got to be such good friends and the wives have kept in touch with each other. One of the boys who was a close friend of Bobby all through training is to be sent across already. This boy was made a co-pilot on a Bomber. Earl is a first pilot on a Bomber but will have several months training yet. Some just happen to get in a group that is scheduled to go across right away.

We have the cutest little paper boy who came through the hospital with the Times and Journal. They come in with a big smile and a cheery "How do you feel today" and I find myself looking for them.

Grandma was telling about someone she knew who said she had my ailment once and was in bed six months. I told Grandma she should go home, trying to cheer me up in that manner.???

Well my supper tray is coming so will close.

Love,
Mother


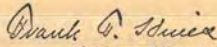
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

National Service Life Insurance

DATE INSURANCE EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 21, 1943
CERTIFICATE No. N- 12 084 617

This Certifies That ALBERT H. MC CANN, JR.
has applied for insurance in the amount of \$ 10,000., payable in case of death.

Subject to the payment of the premiums required, this insurance is granted under the authority of The National Service Life Insurance Act of 1940, and subject in all respects to the provisions of such Act, of any amendments thereto, and of all regulations thereunder, now in force or hereafter adopted, all of which, together with the application for this insurance, and the terms and conditions published under authority of the Act, shall constitute the contract.

 
Administrator of Veterans' Affairs

Countersigned at Washington, D. C.
November 10, 1943 (Date) S. Chapman Registrar

Mrs. Cecile McCann
2014 Marengo St.
New Orleans, La.

Insurance Form 300

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

Oct. 19-20, 1943 Beauregard, LA Hews McCann, Jr.

Dearest Cecile,

I'm a two day old soldier now but I still don't have a uniform. The only evidence I can show is a paper tag which I have to wear outside my clothes attached to a string around my neck. I'll get my clothes tomorrow?

I arrived at Alexandria at noon yesterday and went to Wellan's to see Isidore Gainsburg but he was out to lunch. I had some lunch and found about that I could get a bus to Beauregard at 3:00 p.m. and went back to see Isidore. We were together for two hours which was nice but uneventful. I talked to Rosalie on the phone. Isidore told me to call him whenever I had K.P. and he would come visit me so they would have to relieve me. That may be very useful.



The bus brought me and a good many other draftees to camp about 3:30 p.m. yesterday. We stood in line for half an hour getting a towel roll and our service record books. Then we were marched to the infirmary for a physical examination which consisted of a "short arm" examination for gonorrhea and nothing else although we had to remove all our clothes. Oh yes – the towel roll contains two towels, a shaving brush, a razor, a tooth brush, and a comb. The towels and the comb are nice. After the physical examination? We were marched two blocks to the company orderly tent where we left our baggage. Then we marched back two blocks to the building next to the infirmary where we got our bedding. Then back to the orderly tent where we were assigned to tents. Then we took all our things to the tents we were assigned to and made our beds. Then, finally, supper at about 6:30.

Today we had breakfast at 6:15 a.m. after getting up at 5:30, dressing, making beds, and cleaning the tent. After breakfast we had written examinations which lasted all morning. The first was the general aptitude test which consists of 150 questions to be answered in 40 minutes. No one has ever answered all the questions. I answered 132 of them which is well above average. So far as I could ascertain no one else answered more than 125 of them this morning. I may be able to find out what my grade was tomorrow. The second test was a mechanical aptitude test in three parts. The first part was questions about factual knowledge of elementary physics and mechanics. The second part showed developed patterns of sheet metal work and perspective drawings of the formed parts. Lines in the patterns had to be identified with edges on the formed parts. The third part showed pictures of levers and other simple machines and asked simple mechanical and structural questions about them. I had no trouble with this test and answered all the questions in considerably less than the allotted time of fifteen minutes for each part. This afternoon for three and a half hours we watched training films and heard the articles of war read. Then we had an anti-typhoid injection and supper. I have a headache tonight from too much picture show.

I haven't had time yet to be homesick but I sure do miss you. But don't write yet. I am not supposed to receive any mail at Beauregard. I think I will be at Claiborne this week end. Kiss my babies for me and tell them their daddy loves them.

Goodnight darling,

Hews

October 21, 1943, Beauregard, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Darling

I received your letter today and I certainly was glad to see it. Your little prayer for the children made me a little "gooey" too. I finished all my processing today and was transferred from section 'A' to section 'B' of the reception center. Section 'B' is a group of tents near those of section 'A' in which the completely processed men wait for assignment and transfer to a training camp. Since I was already assigned to Camp Claiborne I should be transferred after a day or two. Some of the men in section 'B', particularly those in the air corps have been waiting in this section for 80 and 90 days with nothing to do but guard duty and K.P. A lot of men who were transferred to section 'B' today with me were given K.P. for tomorrow but I missed it. I may get it tomorrow though. I'm going to stop now and write mother and dad. I haven't written them yet. Good night darling. I love you and miss you very much.

Hews

October 23, 1943, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Hello Darling,

Here I am at Camp Claiborne. We came over late yesterday afternoon. I was so busy last night putting up my bed and getting my clothes arranged that I didn't get to write. There were seven in the group I came over with from Beauregard.

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

When we arrived we were assigned to Company A Prime of the 361st Engineer Regiment for our basic training. After we got over to our Company we found that we were the only new men in a group that was just completing their basic training. The old company is supposed to move out early next week. Today there was nothing for our group to do so we were put to work policing the grounds and 14 barracks buildings. We went over the area three times picking up paper sticks and leaves. Then we raked and swept the ground four times, and swept and tidied the barracks twice. That kept us more or less occupied until about four o'clock this afternoon when the company commander received word that 76 new men were arriving before 5:00 o'clock. The place was a mad house after that. We had (my group of 7 men) to put up 26 beds in each of 4 barracks (the barracks already had some beds in them) and put mattresses, pillows, and quilts on each bed and the cooks had to prepare for an additional 76 men for supper – they had prepared for about 100 men. Of course we had soup. They just cut up the meat and vegetables they had prepared, put them all together in big pots, added water and let them boil a few minutes. It was good soup but pretty thin. We had some more excitement before supper. Two men who had been on furlough came in drunk and feeling very mischievous. They felt so good they just had to do something to let off a little steam so they went through two barracks and turned every bed upside down. The company commander failed to see the humor in the situation and had both men arrested. They will be court-martialed and will probably get six months hard labor without pay and will lose their p.f.c. ratings. They sure did pick a bad time and place to get drunk. Since all the old men here finished their training today most of them were given week-end passes and since us other new men were expected, all of my group of 7 men were put on K.P. for tomorrow. We thought we had a snap job until the 76 new men arrived this evening. Now we will really have to work hard. Camp Claiborne is a tremendous place. It covers more ground than Alexandria. The Engineer Unit Training Center that I am in only occupies a small corner of the camp. There are about 3000 men in the training center. There must be at least 30,000 men at Claiborne all together. We will be restricted to our regimental area for the first two weeks.



Albert Hews McCann, Jr. at Camp Claiborne

After that we may get week-end passes. I am going to try to talk to the Episcopal Chaplain tomorrow and see if he can help me get passes for enough time to come to New Orleans on weekends. I think he can help me. Ordinarily weekend passes are for only 24 hours. As soon as I have met the chaplain I will write Dean Nes and ask him to write the chaplain. I wish you would talk to Dean Nes too and ask him to help. The basic training we will get in this camp will last only about six weeks. After we finish the basic we will be assigned to a permanent regiment for advanced training. Our training here has no connection with engineering at all but our advanced training will mostly be engineering work of the special type done by the regiment to which we are assigned. Our basic work is the same course that is given to the infantry. We start Monday learning how to build a tent, carry a field pack, and do close order drill. Later in the week we will begin to learn the care, feeding, firing, and cleaning of a rifle. We will also learn knot tying, first aid, military courtesy, etc. A heterogeneous collection of things that all soldiers need to learn. We start wearing woolen clothes Monday. According to the army calendar cold weather has arrived in spite of the hot weather we are actually having here. Oh well! Such is army life. I guess I will get used to it. We are supposed to keep our clothes hung on coat hangers at this camp but the army neglected to provide any coat hangers. I surely wish you would send me eight or ten good wire hangers if you can find any. I am tired and I have to get up early tomorrow to peel potatoes, wash dishes, scrub the mess hall, etc. so I think I had better go to sleep. Good night sweetheart. I have enjoyed writing tonight. It helps almost as much as talking to you. By the way there are only 4 telephones here for the 3000 men in my regiment to use so I may not be able to call. You should not call me except in case of emergency. In case of sickness, etc. If you need for me to come home you should call the local – New Orleans – Red Cross chapter and ask them to call the camp by long distance telephone. An emergency pass will then be issued to me immediately. It is not possible for me to get an emergency pass until after the Red Cross has notified the commander that the pass is necessary so it would be a waste of time to call me first. My new address is:

Pvt. A.H. McCann, Jr.
ASN38 521 321
Company A Prime
361st Engr. Regmt. S.S.
Camp Claiborne, LA.

Good night sweetheart. I love you very very much.

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

Hews

P.S. Please send me your mail area number.

October 25, 1943, Camp Claiborne, LA Hews McCann, Jr.

Hello Darling,

I didn't get to see the chaplain yesterday. I worked harder yesterday than I ever have worked in my life at K.P. and I sure am sore today. We served over 200 men at each meal and I washed all the dishes and silver after breakfast and lunch. I had to use strong yellow laundry soap and wash the dishes in a deep double compartment sink. We worked continuously for 16 hours except for the few minutes at each meal that we spent actually eating. Besides washing dishes I helped peel and slice potatoes, scrub the floors after each meal, set the tables, and clean the soot and ashes out of the coal cooking ranges. Yes! We put coal here for cooking and heating. I



can't understand why they don't have gas here. This is such a big camp it should be cheaper and

easier to provide gas than coal. But the army's ways are devious and mysterious, particularly from the worm's-eye viewpoint of a private.

Today we have had a pretty easy time for which I am duly grateful. My hands are raw and tender from dish washing and all my muscles ache. There is a tremendous confusing in camp and the organization is completely disorganized. A great many men have been moving in and out of the camp all day and by some happenstance there have been over 500 men here in company A prime all day. I sure am glad I wasn't on



K.P. today. By tonight there were only a little over 300 men left to spend the night. Not more than 150 will stay in this company for their basic training. The only thing I have had to do all day was about 4 hours of close order drill spread out over this morning and this afternoon. I spent the rest of the day resting. Please speak to Dean Nes about writing the Episcopal Chaplain here. I still don't know the Chaplains name and I won't be able to speak to him before next Sunday. I am still very tired tonight so I am going to stop now and shave and go to bed.

Goodnight sweetheart,

Hews

P.S. Please send me some garters.

October 27, 1943, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Dearest Cecile!

I am sorry to say that I completely forgot about Dorothy's birthday. I got a letter today from you and another one from your mother to remind me. From mother's description I am sure that it must have been an impressive and imminently successful occasion. I am so glad you got stationery as a present to Dorothy from me. Please help her write to me. I will be glad to get letters from her. Let Cecile and Annette do a little dictating too. I miss them very much.

Yesterday morning at the first formation after breakfast I was called out with six other men to do detail work in the company supply room all day. At first I didn't know what I was in for but it turned out to be a good thing. All supplies, except food, for our company come through the company supply room. Right now they are stocked up with field packs, rifles, blankets, tents, etc. and are low on clothing. We got our basic uniform at the reception centers but reception centers in different parts of the country issue slightly different basic uniforms. Then too each branch of the army has odd pieces which are peculiar to the particular service. Each man's basic uniform issue is listed on a standard form which is sent with him wherever he goes. No one may receive any additional uniform issue unless his form is in the files of the supply sergeant. There are a great many men here who need various pieces of uniform and equipment and I was given the job of preparing the requisition. I had to take each man's clothing form and determine the pieces he needed and his clothing sizes, make a list of the required number of pieces of each size, and prepare a requisition. It was a pretty big job and I didn't get through yesterday so I was told to return today to finish it. I worked hard and tried to do a good job. When I finished a little after noon today the supply sergeant complimented me for doing such a good job and told me he hadn't expected to get it finished before next Monday. I just took it easy around the supply most of the afternoon while the rest of the detail rolled field packs, swept the floor, counted laundry, cleaned rifles, etc. I missed all the dirty work yesterday too. At four o'clock this afternoon

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the sergeant told me I could go get cleaned up for supper while the rest of the detail stayed on to clean up. He told me to come back again tomorrow. The only thing I did all afternoon was to letter the alphabet on some file index divisions. He



Albert Hews McCann on the right, front. With buddies

wanted letters about 1 ½ inch high on the upper left hand corner of each card. I lettered a nice roman alphabet freehand complete with serifs that turned out pretty well. The sergeant kept coming over to watch me. He was much impressed that I could make such uniform letters freehand without making any measurements or drawing any guide lines. All in all I think I have made a very good impression on the sergeant who is a very good guy. I may be able to manage a fairly regular assignment in the supply room helping him. If I can manage that I'll miss most of the dirty detail work around here. I was unlucky last night tho. We have to eat out of our mess kits now that they are feeding so many men in our mess hall. After we finish eating we line up outside and each man washes his own kit in big kettles full of hot water. I was standing in line last night in front of the company orderly room when a corporal came out and took the names of eight men

in the line including me. We were told to report to the orderly room at eight o'clock last night in our fatigue clothes. When we got there we were sent to the regimental headquarters where we swept and scrubbed the floors, cleaned toilets, urinals, water closets, and lavatories, dusted furniture, and carried coal until 9:30. There always seems to be some dirty work for the poor private to do. However, after a man has been here two weeks his serious training is started and they let up on the detail work. I sure will be glad when the happy anniversary of my second week in camp arrives.

Uncle Sam's calendar was right. Monday morning we had another cold wave. It warmed up a little today but since early Monday morning we have had strong north winds and low temperatures. Last night the temperature went down to 37 degrees. The woolen clothing was very welcome. I sure was glad to be indoors most of the time. I hope we have warm weather for our overnight hikes. Well I guess I had better stop now and go to bed. I wish I could be home to see how nicely you have the bathroom fixed up and to keep you warm these cold nights. Good night darling and

Love,
Hews

October 28, 1943, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Darling,

I got two more letters from you today and I sure was glad to see them. One of them you mailed on the 20th to Camp Beauregard and was forwarded to me here. I sure was glad to hear from you it makes me feel good but homesick when I get your letters. The other letter was mailed just yesterday. I was surprised to get any mail today because I moved again today. I am now in Company C of the 361st Engr. Regmt. When you address letters to me just substitute "Company C" for "Company A Prime". I think I am now permanently attached to Company C. When we got ready to leave A Prime this morning the lieutenant told the group I moved with that we had been especially picked to become a part of the 361st Regiment which is now being activated. He said that we would receive 13 weeks of basic training and that we would then receive 3 or 4 weeks of tactical field training in bivouac before we go abroad. He said he thought we would probably embark sometime in January. Up to the present the 361st Regiment has been a training and replacement regiment but it is now being activated and the men being attached to it now will form its permanent personnel. We will be trained together and we will work together. I don't like this army life a bit better than I expected to and I didn't expect to like it at all. However they keep us busy all the time. It's not too bad as long as I'm busy. They have a nice mess hall here at Company C complete with plates, knives, forks, and spoons, (A Prime had no forks). No more eating out of mess kits. The food here is good too. The only fault is that everything is piled in the plate in such a mess that at every bite you get a little of everything. I am going to stop now and write mother and dad to tell them my new address. I have written you nearly every night since I left home – let me know if you are not getting them. Please send me some coat hangers. I need them badly. I need something to mark my clothes with. I think Wards in New Orleans has a kit for service men that has a rubber stamp (name and serial number) and waterproof ink in it. If you can get me one of those it would be most convenient. Tell your mother that I enjoyed her letter very much and that I will try to write to her soon. Goodnight darling and lots of

Love,
Hews

October 29, 1943, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Darling,

Today is the first day of my second week at Camp Claiborne. Company C marked the day for me by putting me on guard duty for the first time. I can think of lots of things I would rather do. Each company in the regiment has to provide guards for the regimental area on successive days. About 75 guards are required each day. Guards are on duty continuously for 24 hours starting at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon. Each guard walks his post for 2 hours then rests in the guard house for 4 hours. I was part of the 1st guard relief so I started walking my post at 2:00 o'clock this afternoon and continued until 4:00 o'clock when I was relieved. I went back on duty at 8:00 o'clock this evening and I have just been relieved again at 10:00 o'clock. I don't expect to get much sleep before going on duty again at 2:00 A.M. for my next hitch because at 12:00 A.M. we are supposed to go over to the mess hall for coffee and sandwiches to keep us awake. However I will be able to sleep from 4:00 A.M. until about 7:30 A.M. and after we are relieved at 2:00 P.M. tomorrow we can sleep as much as we want. Next weekend I expect that I will be able to get a pass. They give preference to those who have served guard duty. My guard post is a rather godforsaken one that is about 2/3 of a mile long. The post is a big rectangle which has barracks on two sides and is just open ground on the other two sides. I have to keep walking round and round the place carrying a Garand rifle. We don't challenge except from 11:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M. I don't expect to see anyone on my challenge hitch from 2:00 A.M. till 4:00 A.M. unless the officer of the day or the corporal of the guards comes around to see if I am awake and walking my post properly. It's a mighty lonesome place so I will be glad if one of them does come around to check on me. It's almost 11:00 o'clock now so I am going to lie down and rest a little while. I'll write some more later. Well here I am again sweetheart. Its 10 minutes past 7:00 A.M. now and I have just finished breakfast. I haven't had much sleep. Something interrupts each of my rest periods. Super was at 6:00 o'clock last night during my 4:00 to 8:00 rest period. Coffee and sandwiches at



A. Hews McCann, Jr. on leave, Camp Claiborne

midnight interrupted my 10:00 P.M. to 2:00 a.m. rest, breakfast at 6:00 A.M. interrupted my 4:00 A.M. to 8:00 A.M. rest and dinner at 12:00 noon will interrupt my 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. rest. Besides we have to leave the guard house half an hour early to relieve old guard. I have had about three hours sleep. My legs and shoulders are very tired and sore from walking so much and carrying my rifle. The rifle weighs about 9 pounds when we start out but by now it feels like 50 pounds. I expect it is a good thing for me though because we are taking a long hike Monday morning. I will be able to catch up on my rest tomorrow and I think I will be in pretty good shape for a 10 mile hike Monday. Nothing eventful happened during my night watches. The only person I had to challenge was a corporal, who was in charge of quarters, who had to wake up his cooks at 2:30 A.M. -----Well its 10:30 now and at last I have finished my last hitch of walking – from 8:00 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. --- Another interruption, this is a serial letter. This time we were marched back to the company area to shave, wash, and brush our shoes for inspection of the guard, and to eat dinner. Its 10 minutes of 1:00 now and I wont have much time to write. We will have inspection then the changing of the guard ceremony which takes about an hour. I am so tired and sleepy that I could hardly eat at noon. My rifle fore-sight caught on a clothes line last night and fell to the ground on the end of the barrel. I haven't had an opportunity to clean it so I expect to be called down at inspection. ----- Another long break. Its 8:00 o'clock Saturday night now. Fortunately my rifle wasn't inspected at guard inspection so I wasn't gigged. The Officer of the Day only inspects a few rifles at random and luckily he didn't choose mine. There was an inspection of the company this afternoon with field packs but the guard didn't have to attend. Later there was a barracks inspection and there was some difference of opinion as to whether or not the guard was exempted. I was so tired out that I dodged it and hid out at the PX till supper time. No one has remarked on my absence so I guess I am alright. Most of the other guards were with me. After supper I stood mail call but it was a dry run for me today. I cleaned my rifle for about an hour and finally got it in pretty good shape again. There was a big crap game going on in the hut tonight. 3 men with more money than good sense were shooting for pretty high stakes. Most of the bets were for \$10 or \$20 but occasionally they went as high as \$50 and \$60 on one pass. One man lost over \$200. I just had a shower and I am finishing this letter in bed. Tomorrow I am going to church, then I'm going to spend the day writing letters to try and

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increase my influx of mail. I am feeling a little better but my feet and legs and shoulders are very sore. I won't know whether or not I can get a pass to come home next weekend until next Friday evening so I won't be able to notify you. Don't be disappointed if I can't come, I am bound to get a pass soon now. My pass will probably be from 12:00 noon Saturday till 6:00 P.M. Sunday so I won't get home before Saturday night. If I get back after 6:00 P.M. Sunday it will be alright because there is no check before 6:00 A.M. Monday. Honey there are a few things I need here badly that are not available. Please send me 8 or 10 coat hangers, some garters, some vitamin A & D pills and some sort of outfit to mark my clothing with as soon as possible. Ask your mother to help you get them together. I have to stop now and catch up on my sleep. I am on the K.P. list again for Monday so I will miss the hike they have scheduled. Goodnight sweetheart. I love you very much.

Hews

November 1, 1943, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Hello Darling,

This is not going to be a very long letter tonight. I had K.P. again today and I am very tired. We went to work at 5:30 this morning and finished at 8:30 tonight. I was assigned to washing pots, pans, and kitchen utensils and I was kept at it continuously all day except for about fifteen minutes off to eat each meal. And I had to eat standing up at that. When I got back to my barracks tonight I found that all my things had been moved to another bunk, several men and beds had been moved to other barracks and everything was in an uproar. In the shuffle I have lost a blanket and a box of new stationery. I expect they will turn up somewhere tomorrow. We only have 22 men in this barracks now and we have a little more room to move around. The change is supposed to be permanent. The regiment is being consolidated and put into permanent groups for training. The groups are supposedly being organized according to the special service classifications so we will train together now and learn to work together when we go overseas. Say if you are not using the finger nail clippers I used to cut my toenails, please send them to me. My toenails are getting too long.

Goodnight sweetheart,

Hews

November 2, 1943, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Hello Sweetheart,

I got your package today and I sure was glad to see it. I was getting very tired of living out of my barracks bags. They are very inconvenient. Those smudges at the top of the page are from the chocolate you put in the box. Several others in the hut are enjoying it too. By the time I got the package today it certainly was in sorry shape. It was addressed to me in Company A Prime. They changed the address and sent it to Company C. There it was marked "Not in Company C" and was sent back to Company A Prime. A Prime sent it back to C and I finally got it tonight but one end of the box was torn open and half of the paper was torn off. The most peculiar thing though was that there were no stamps on the wrapping paper and no cancellation marks. Some of the paper was torn off in the corner where stamps are placed but most of the paper was still there. This is the first time that I have had any trouble with my mail. I also got a letter from you today which you wrote Sunday. You have no idea how much pleasure it gives me to get your letters and how miserable I am when I get nothing at mail call. I had a terrible day Sunday. I was so blue and homesick I cried a little. It was the first time my emotions had gotten the upper hand. As long as they keep me busy all the time I am all right. Sunday I was still very tired from guard duty and I had the sniffles. I went to the Chapel for services Sunday morning and began to feel blue. After dinner I was feeling so miserable that I went off by myself to write letters in the woods back of our company area. That was where I made a big mistake. I was in the poorest company in the world when I was by myself. I would have been better off if I had gone to the Service Club instead. After supper I did go to the Service Club where I improved considerably. The thing that is so bad is being so close to you and being unable to come to you. I found out today that I can't have a pass starting at noon Saturday and running until 5:00 A.M. Monday until I have been here for about a month and a half. The longest pass I can get is from 5:00 P.M. Saturday to midnight Sunday. However, if I can get a pass at all this weekend I am coming home. I'll get in sometime early Sunday morning I guess, and I'll have to come back Sunday afternoon, but I just have to see you again soon. Its late darling so I must stop and go to bed.

Goodnight,

Hews

November 14, 1943, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Darling,

I had a swell day today with mother and dad. They got to the camp this morning about 11:00 o'clock and I met them at the gate where I had been waiting since 9:30. One of their front tires was leaking so I had to put on the spare. We had dinner in the company mess hall where we were the guests of honor with a ten man table all to ourselves. Civilians are not usually allowed to eat in the mess halls but a lot of the men were out on passes today so the mess sergeant let me have them to dinner

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today. They didn't think much of the handle less cups and large spoons we eat with but they enjoyed the food I think. They were not very loud in their praise. We spent the afternoon in Alexandria just walking around or sitting on park benches, talking and enjoying each other's company. I called the Gainsburgs but they weren't at home.

Say honey, on Thanksgiving day we are going to have an extra special turkey dinner and the men are supposed to have members of their family or their friends in as guests of the Company. Mother and dad are coming down if they can manage to get the day off – they are both supposed to work. They both said they thought they would be able to get off. Of course I want you to come too. I will be awfully disappointed if you can't come. Maybe you can come up the evening before Thanksgiving day and spend the night with the Gainsburgs. If you can I will get a pass to come to Alexandria that evening. I am going to try to get another weekend pass next weekend so I can come to New Orleans again. I won't know whether or not I can come until Saturday evening but just in case I do get one check the door Saturday night and be sure that the kids haven't fixed it again. We are going to fire on the 200 yard range tomorrow morning and for some unannounced reason we are starting at 6:30 in the A.M. so we are having breakfast at 5:30. We usually eat breakfast at 6:30. They are going to wake us up at 5:00 o'clock so we are going to bed at 10:00 o'clock tonight. Its ten minutes of ten now so I had better stop writing and get my clothes off. Good night sweetheart, I love you.

Hews



Charles S. Hamilton
Paul C. Hanna, Sr.
Roy C. Harrison
Alfred A. Hayman
Edward B. Hayes
John C. Hill
Anthony F. Holden
Charles W. Howell
Roger H. Karrick
Clarence H. Kaye
Roy D. Kaylor
Orlo A. Kuhn
Edward A. LeClair
Morton Levine
Thomas M. Lewallen, Jr.
Paul K. Lindquist
Michael Losordo
Laurence B. Lunde
Harry O. Luyster
Raymond A. Mailloux
James A. Marple
William G. Marr
Alfred J. Martin
Benito E. Martinez
Michael Marvos
William O. Mathis
Albert E. McCann
James R. McFarland
Vincent B. McGaffigan
Willard W. McKinzie
John M. McMillin, Jr.
Roland D. Menard
Elmer F. Metzler
Robert E. Moore

20 N. Wacker Drive.
50 Wintworth St.
6336 Neff Road
5035A Cates Ave.
Box 1441
408 E. Oak Ave.
506 N. 12th St.
R. F. D.
212 Catalpa Road
5137 Warwick Ave.

20 1/4 E. Market St.
1260 S. Main St.
4651 Drexel Blvd.
515 W. 15th St.
2206 N. 53rd St.
35 George St.
2911 Sunset Circle
3536 S. Champion Ave.
205 Hamlet St.
Rte 1. Box 188
195 E. 4th St. N.
2806 N. Hope St.
Rte. 2, Box 411c
2557 Grove St.
2404 I St.
5340 Coliseum St.
1027 S. 30th St.
45 Whitten St.
1560 Washington St.
2614 Gladstone Drive
306 Whittenton St.
13 Taylor Ave.
171 Decatur St.

Chicago, Ill.
Charleston, S. C.
Detroit, Mich.
St. Louis, Mo.
Weed, Cal.
Tampa, Fla.
Phoenix, Ariz.
Hooker, Okla.
Lexington, Ky.
Chicago, Ill.
Sulphur Springs, Ark.
Tiffin, Ohio
Fall River, Mass.
Chicago, Ill.
Little Rock, Ark.
Milwaukee, Wisc.
Hyde Park, Mass.
Sioux City, Iowa
Columbus, Ohio
Fall River, Mass.
Winchester, Ark.
Provo, Utah
Philadelphia, Pa.
El Paso, Texas
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Dorchester, Mass.
Denver, Colo.
Dallas, Tex.
Taunton, Mass.
South Norwalk, Conn.
Corning, N. Y.

*November 15, 1943, Camp
Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.*

Hello Darling,

I'm mighty tired again tonight, which is nothing unusual. We have been going pretty steady since 5:00 o'clock this morning. Its 8:30 P.M. now. We marched 2 1/2 miles to the 200 yard rifle range this morning carrying our rifles and range packs which weigh about 40 pounds together. We never use the packs we carry on these marches, we only carry them as a part of the physical training program. I'm not very sore tonight though, I am beginning finally to toughen up a little. We fired on the range this morning. Two men fired 25 rounds each at each target. While one man is firing the other man acts as coach. We fired 10 rounds in prone position, 10 rounds in standing position, and 5 rounds in kneeling position. I scored 76 out of a possible 125 which is pretty poor shooting. The average in my squad was 89 and the high score was 105. They may be able to make a marksman out of me yet but they will have to work mighty hard to do it. This afternoon my company worked in the target pits operating the targets for 'D' Company which had operated the targets for us all morning. We ate dinner out of our mess kits at the range. The dinner was cooked in the mess hall kitchen and brought out to the range in great big vacuum insulated containers. Working the targets turned out to be a pretty strenuous job. The targets are mounted on large 2x4 frames that are counterbalanced to slide down into the pits and up into firing position. Every time a shot is fired the target is pulled down, a piece of paper is pasted over the hole, the target is pushed back up into firing position, and the shot is scored by showing a colored disk. In spite of the counter balancing the targets are pretty hard to push up and down. After the firing was over we had to remove all the target frames and store them in the target house, then we had to police the area for an hour before we were marched back to our barracks. After supper each rifle had to be scrubbed out with G.I. soap and hot water, then dried out and oiled. That takes about 1 1/2 hours. The same cleaning operation has to be repeated each day for 3 days after a rifle is fired. The platoon sergeant just came in and told us we would have to roll full field packs before

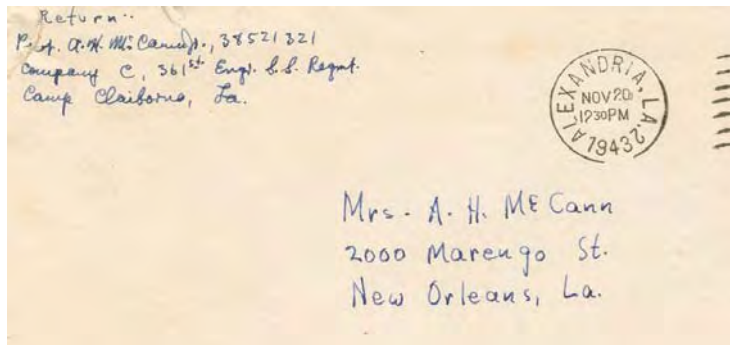
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we go to bed. There is no privacy here and we have no time at all we can call our own. Well I must stop and roll that damn pack. Goodnight sweetheart. I love you. Please come up here Thanksgiving day.

Hews

November 16, 1943, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Hello Sweetheart,



I got the pictures tonight. They sure do look good to me. It's very nice to have pictures of you and the children with me all the time. Excuse the pause, I had to take the pictures out and look at them again. Gosh, they sure do look nice. The snapshots mother gave me don't show details of features like the posed photos do, but the snapshots show more characteristic poses and actions. They are all mighty nice to have.



Dorothy Brock McCann, 1943

Just after I mailed your letter last night I rolled my field pack. As I was buckling the last strap the sergeant came back in and told me that I had been put on latrine detail for today so I wouldn't need the field pack. Things sure do change fast around here. There are two latrines in our company area, one small one for part of company C to use and one large one which is shared by Companies B and C. I was unlucky enough to get the large one. Ordinarily either two or three men are assigned to the big latrine but for some unknown reason I was assigned to the place by myself. The place has 20 water closets, 14 urinals, and 17 lavatories in one big room, the next room is a large dressing room, the next room is a shower room with 18 showers. Next to the shower room is the heater room with two large coal fired water heaters. There is another coal fired space heater in the lavatory room. The shower room and dressing room have wood duck boards on the floor. I had to clean all the water closets, urinals, lavatories, and mirrors, wash the walls and shelves around the lavatories, scrub the floors, scrub the floors, scrub the benches and duck boards, scrub the walls in the shower room, keep the fires going and carry ashes. I had a might busy day. Tonight we saw three more training films in the mess hall after supper Its 9:30 now and I'm going on to bed so I can get a little extra rest. Goodnight sweetheart, I love you.

Hews

11/21/43, Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny), Dear Cecile:

My I hope Hews is there again today. I can take his being in the army as long as I know he can get home to his family. Cecile are you going to visit him Thursday? Please let me know where you will be so we can be together. I have not asked for the day yet but am sure I can get it.

We started our Christmas shopping after work yesterday. It is surely hard to try to shop after a hard days work and so tired. I wanted to get dolls but Dad thought I had better ask your plans first. They are high and scarce so if you want us to get them please let me know soon.

Mrs. Lacose is quite sick. She has been failing for some time and Friday she fainted and has been in a coma since.

Just finished writing Mary. I have put off writing her because it seemed so hard to find expressive words. Some way I was not surprised and yet I was. Don't suppose we will ever know what broke them up but I believe Bobby has been uncertain all along.

I ordered by Christmas turkey this week. We received a government bulletin at the office saying there would be a turkey shortage, so decided to be an early bird and order at once. With the prospects of having all of my family together this Christmas I have taken on new life. As soon as I know just what day you all will be here I am going to get my word in for time off my annual leave.

Tell baby Cecile she will get to come to see us again this year because Uncle Bock is going to bring her.

We have had our outing and been to church again since I started this letter. We went in to see Mrs. Lacoge and found her better, however her mind wanders so she did not know us when we left. I told her we were going to church and she naturally thought it was her church so she told us to tell her people that she is being well cared for. Mrs. Schaefer read two letters she received from Nick last week. He is now in Italy and as near as they can tell from his letters he is in the fight. He tries to word his letters to pass the censors so they draw conclusions at times. He mentioned you folks in one. His mother had written about your recent visit and how cute the children were with the pet geese.

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We went to Clara's place and Evelyn Sue came out bringing the little baby and Jimmie. Audrey Sue is visiting Bills sister in law in Livingston, TX and expects to make the trip home on the train alone.

Bed time – the Sundays seem short, especially when the weather is so pretty and I want to be out in the fresh air.

Love,
Mother

1/2/1944, Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

Dear Cecile,

My this week has gone by in a hurry and yet it seems such a long time ago since we were all there together. The time there was surely a happy time. It meant so much to us to enjoy Christmas with you. The many happenings which I recall each day still give me pleasure. The singing on Christmas morning was a memory which I shall long remember. The sweet voices of the children as they sang with all their hearts. Annette singing as well as the older children. I can see you are going to have so much fun with them around the piano. I heard a cute song over the radio not so long ago. It was all about going on the train to visit Grandma and Grandpa. I wish I could get it for them. Dorothy in her costume so proudly reciting for us. She was so sweet. Baby Cecile when she dressed up in her new dress and put a Christmas ribbon in her hair asking me if I didn't think it would be nice if her Daddy took her picture standing by the tree so I could bring it home with me. I still think it a fine idea and hope Sam can get pictures of all of you. I sent those from last year which I had carried in my purse, for Hews when he wrote that he didn't have any with him. It seemed so natural to have you and Hews there together that I forgot for the time being that his being there was only temporary. What I am trying to say is that we were so happy to be with all of you, as always. You were so sweet to us and we spent a most pleasant Christmas with you.

Our office has really felt full force of the flu. About half of the ladies were out and for one thing, slack time, we might have been unable to carry on. I expect most of them will be back tomorrow

The New Year came in with rain. It has not been raining so much today but spent a good part of Friday and Saturday at it.

Mrs. Voelcher at the office, gave me some brown meat stamps Friday so I bought a large slice of center ham. I decided it would be a good time to have the family over so am expecting them any minute now. Buffet supper with sliced ham, congealed vegetable salad, hot rolls, jam, coffee, fruit cake.

LaRue called and asked us to take a ride to Oil City-Belcher and back. She said Percy had some food coupons to spare so they wanted to use them. I sure wish I could transfer some coupons which are more than needed for someone to somebody who needs them for their business driving.

Was so glad you called, have been wondering how things are with you and as usual I just like to hear your voice and of course the children's. Bless their sweet little lives.

Hews called about nine this morning and wished me a Happy Birthday. He was anxious to know what I thought of my chair. I am simply wild about it. I think it is the most comfortable chair to be found. I find myself just sitting and rocking.-a bad sign I know but I love it. From what Hews said, he is paying for his vacation. He has been on detail with very little time to rest and said he is about to go to sleep on his feet. He walked guard last night in pouring rain. He could not get blankets for his bed the night he got back so slept in his clothes and nearly froze. When the others get back from leave his duties will lessen I hope. Sure glad he had a rest from the army even though he is busy now. Expect it is hard to get a military feeling, don't you?

Love,
Mom

1/10/1944, Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

Dear Cecile: Are you having as much pleasure out of your chair as I am? You know Dad reproached me a bit when my chair came because I had expressed a desire for a chair when I was with Hews Jr. I will confess I felt a bit guilty and told Hews so but I also told him I was glad he got the chair and I think Daddy is too. I notice he enjoys sitting in it and I have to route him out of it quite often. It seems to be just the right height for me and fits my sway back perfectly.

We received a nice letter from Hews today. It is the first letter he has written us since his leave. He seems interested in his work and is especially interested in his chorus. I found two books of songs, one titled "101 Hymns" – the other "The Army & Navy Choir". They were hymns which are familiar and beautiful. One was just for men's voices the other was usable because the range was medium and I believe a mans voice could take the soprano part alright.

Every day in this New Year has been a busy one at the office. Last Monday it seemed everyone in town wanted something but after today I have decided today everyone was down there. My such a hustle and hub bub.

Did you have a cold snap over the week end. It was quite gloomy and cold here. Yesterday and today the sun has been shining and is just crisp enough to make us feel peppy.

Our third community concert is to be this Wednesday evening. It is to be a violin soloist. I guess Dorothy is back in school again. It seems strange to think of her as a school girl. Her little baby days went by so fast as are those of Baby

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Cecile and Annette. They all seem so grown up for their ages and such sweet little persons but how could they be otherwise with the parents they have.

Hews doesn't mention being sore so I am wondering if he has become hardened to army exercise. Hope so. He looked well and seemed well for which I am so thankful.

It was two years ago this past Sunday that I rushed back from Vicksburg to be with Bobby thinking so darkly of the future. It was his last Sunday home from Camp Wolters and I was afraid it would be so long before we would see him again. My I had a hard decision to make because I wanted to be with you and help you in your time of need. I think I have become a bit more steady; perhaps just keeping very busy has been my steadying factor. Since things have not been so bad for Bobby I feel that Hews will do equally as well and somehow my faith seems to get stronger with each day that they will come back to live a full and happy life. My I do pray it won't be long.

I got down as far as Hearn's at noon last Wednesday and found two sheets, a wool comfort and new suit. It didn't pay me to wander out of Market Street district did it? You should see Hearn's, it is nearly bare and Daddy heard they may close because they are having trouble getting stock. My suit is pretty – strictly tailored medium blue. Now some day I shall go hat hunting and then I will dash out in my finery – Ha.

Time to go to bed.

Love,

Mother

1/18/1944, Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

Dear Cecile: Sunday got by me again. We went to church as usual and invited the Hardens home for dinner and the afternoon. Went calling on sick folks later and Grace Preston came in after that so I did not get letters off to anyone. I always feel that my week has started off badly when I have not had my visit with my children.

Tell the children that we were in fairyland Friday night and Saturday. It rained all day Friday and ice formed on the trees and wires. About six thirty it started to snow and by nine we had around six inches of snow. My it was pretty. It looked especially pretty with the lights sparkling on the ice and snow and the moon out full. We wished for all of you for I know the children would have enjoyed playing in it.

Buddys wife sent Grandma a picture of herself and little Bobby. The baby is just like Buddy, cute as can be.

I am writing while drying my hair at the Beauty Parlor after work. There is a girl in here who is having a big time. Her father is a Colonel and overseas. She has lived a good part of her life at Barksdale. She was telling about a Lieutenant proposing to her last night and how surprised he was to learn she is only sixteen years of age.

Grandma and Grandpa are both better and with another day or two of sunshine should be well.

We went to see the picture "Du Barry was a Lady" Saturday and found it very amusing. It is in color and the costumes are quite colorful.

Charles flew home last Thursday. He has two weeks and is then to report to Salt Lake City which is embarkation point for air corps. Adelaide plans to go with him and stay until he leaves there. Yesterday he flew back to Dalhart and expected to start back with all of his belongings today in his car. He was lucky in that one of the planes had to come to Barksdale for some repairs and that is the reason he flew down and returned by air.

Things are popping as usual at the office. Not so much rush perhaps but a constant clash of personalities. Too many want credit for being the big cheese. Our chief clerk has resigned and Mrs. Caldwell has settled down as supreme commander but – and hereby is a story – Ha – A new clerk was put on the morning and she has started in my department. Expect she went home wondering who was who and why. Do you have anything like that in your office? Expect not if men are in authority. Oh well this is not very amusing to you I am sure.

Will call you soon – it is so nice to hear all of your sweet voices. The wires are still down but expect they will be in order soon.

All for today

Love

Mom

February 13, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Hello Darling,

Today is just like all the rest. Although it is Sunday the construction work is going right on. Indeed they are now working three shifts twenty four hours a day in order to be able to complete the placement of thirty thousand cubic yards of earth in the railroad embankments in time to complete the job in three weeks. I doubt that they will be able to do it. They are using quite a bit of heavy equipment on the job but they haven't nearly enough to complete the job on schedule. There is plenty of heavy equipment in the camp and I can't understand why more of it is not released for this job. There are plenty of men in the regiment who joined this outfit as heavy equipment operators who are fairly itching to get to work on this job. This is the first opportunity they have had to work on a real job since they joined the army. All these men could work and

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demonstrate their ability if more equipment were released for the job. I think that I have been assigned as rigger on the job for the last week. I hope that the pile driving for the timber trestle has been completed by then so I won't have to work on the pile driver. There is too much heavy work for the riggers on a pile driver to suit my taste. I am still on guard today but today is my last. I don't know yet what I will be doing next week. I hope it's not K.P. The boys who were put on K.P. last Monday are still at it. A week of K.P. is too much for me. On bivouac though the K.P. work is fairly easy. There are no floors to scrub or tables to scrub and set. There are still pots and pans to wash and garbage to dispose of which is messy work. The K.P. also gets up earlier and works later than anyone else. Well I'll know the bad news tomorrow in any event. The job as guard that I have had all this week has been a snap. But it is very boring to stand around all day with a rifle in your hand and have nothing to do so I won't be sorry to be doing something else. The time will pass faster if I am busy. I don't know yet whether or not I will be able to get a three day pass during Bobby's visit. Only one man a week is allowed to have a three day pass in my company and there are usually a lot of applications. I haven't applied for a pass yet though because mother hasn't told me definitely just when he is arriving. If I can't get a pass I wish you would consider coming to Alexandria for a few days soon. If you can leave the children with your mother and come up here I can come into town overnight on Monday. Wednesday and Saturday and we could be together in the camp until eleven o'clock on other nights. I am very much afraid that we are going to be moved as soon as this bivouac is over and I can't bear to think of leaving without seeing you again. I'll let you know the minute I hear about the three day pass. I must go on duty again now so goodbye sweetheart. I love you.

Hews

February 15, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Hello Sweetheart,

I have had a very fatiguing time the last couple of days. Yesterday morning at about 3:00 o'clock it began to rain very hard. The rain came through my shelter half as though it wasn't there. There was no possible chance of sleeping so I got dressed, rolled up my wet bedding, and sat under a relatively dry part of my tent until daylight. It was still raining and I was so disgruntled in the morning that I didn't eat any breakfast. The rain finally stopped about 8:00 a.m. At 8:30 they routed me out with three other men and put us to work draining the holes in the dirt road in our bivouac area. When we finished draining the road we were sent to the gravel pit in a dump truck where we loaded two yards of gravel into the truck with our long handled shovels. Then we went back and unloaded the gravel into the holes in the road, a shovel full at a time. Then back to the gravel pit for another load. This time the truck got stuck on the way out of the pit. The gravel had to be dumped in order to lighten the truck enough for us to get it out of the hole. So we had to shovel in another two yards of gravel after we finally managed to get the truck out of the hole. By the time we finished unloading that gravel on the road it was after 5:00 so we quit for the day. I had supper then chopped wood enough for a big fire so that I could dry my covers. At about 7:15 just as I was beginning to finish drying my covers my platoon sergeant came by and informed that I had to go on outpost sentry duty. He sent me over to the sergeant of the guard. I had to wait until 9:00 p.m. before the sergeant of the guard came in to tell me what shift I would be on. He put me on duty in a foxhole machine gun emplacement from midnight to 4:00 o'clock when I wasn't relieved. The wires got crossed up somehow and no one awakened my relief. I couldn't leave my post so I was stuck. I was finally relieved at 7:00 o'clock this morning. I ate breakfast then and got to bed about 8:00 o'clock. At 11:30 they woke me up to tell me that I had to work on the pile driver from 4:00 o'clock until midnight tonight. So I got up, dressed and ate a very poor lunch. There was so little time left to rest that I decided I would rather write to you. I don't know when I'll have another opportunity at this rate. I don't think they will get very much work out of me tonight. I'm so tired and sleepy that I don't care whether the work gets done or not. I tried to apply for a three day pass yesterday but I was told that no applications would be accepted until after bivouac is over. I must go and get ready for work now darling. I love you,

Hews

February 18, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Hello Sweetheart,

I've been working with the rigging crew on the pile driver for two nights now. We are working on a trestle about 70 feet long which crosses a small stream and some swampy land. The mud is terrific. The ground is naturally soft and spongy and when the piles are being driven the vibration pounds the ground to a jelly. For eight hours, 4:00 p.m. to midnight, we wade around in mud that comes halfway to my knees. You can't see where leggings stop and shoes begin. The work is pretty hard especially in that mud. We often have heavy loads to carry. If it were not so serious and dangerous it would be comic to see how we slip and slide around trying to move heavy timbers and equipment. The piles are being driven with a bastard rig on a big drag line excavating crane. The machine weighs about 45 tons and one of the most arduous jobs is building a level track with heavy timbers for the machine to run on. The riggers principle job is getting the piles attached to the guides of the pile driver and holding them straight while they are being driven. The piles are brought to a point about 150 feet from the crane by caterpillar tractors. Then we pull a cable from the crane and attach it to a pile. The crane then lifts the

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pile and pulls it over to the guides of the pile driver, which hangs from the end of the boom of the crane. Then cant hooks are attached to the bottom of the pile and it is twisted until it falls into the guides. Then the hammer is lowered onto the pile. Next the foot of the pile is pulled into position and the pile and hammer are lowered. Before the driving can start the crane must be moved around until the pile is vertical. At last the air pressure is turned on and the driving starts. The guides of the pile driver are supported at the end of the boom by 20-foot cables. As soon as the air pressure is turned on the guides begin to swing and the pile drives crooked. So we must stop the hammer and jockey the machine around until the pile is plumb again. We drive from six to nine piles in eight hours. That pile driver they had at Consolidated can easily drive ten to fifteen piles an hour.

All last night and all day today we have had a slow drizzle. The temperature has gone up but everything is wet and we are very uncomfortable crowded into our pup tents. Everyone is sore and stiff from too much hard work and too little sleep. Even when there is time to sleep it is very uncomfortable sleeping on the damp hard ground in damp blankets. All of us will be very glad to see the end of this bivouac. Its dinner time now darling so I must go eat. I love you very much.

Hews

February 18, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Hello Sweetheart,

This will have to be a quickie. I don't have much time before time to go to work. I have been making up every morning with a terrible back ache from sleeping on the hard ground. So I just took time off to collect enough pine needles to make myself a mattress about eight inches thick. I hope it works. I haven't had a good nights sleep since we have been out here. Even when I had enough time to sleep, which hasn't been many. Gosh but the mud was terrific last night. It has been very wet here for the last two days. We have had no hard rain but the sky has been overcast and it has drizzled most of the time. The mud is ankle-deep everywhere on the job and there are some places where it is knee-deep. All of the timbers and piles and ropes and so forth are covered with mud. I fell twice last night – once on my back and once on my stomach. You can imagine what a mess I was at quitting time. Several men fell into the water while trying to walk on slippery logs, but I managed to stay out of it. I am sitting by a fire now trying to dry my shoes enough so that I can get my galoshes on. They issued high top galoshes to us yesterday. They are very heavy especially when covered with mud. They keep the mud out but water comes in over their tops and keeps my legs and shoes wet. I must go now darling. I love you.

Hews

February 23, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Hello Sweetheart,

I'm back on the job again. I'm working as a carpenter on the trestle on the 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. shift. Now carpentering on a railroad trestle is a far cry from house building. We work with very large timbers, 12 x 12, 9 x 18, 3 x 12, etc. which are bolted together and to the piling with long 1" p bolts. About 90% of the work consists of "lay hold ----Heave" to get the timbers in place. After the timbers are in place it is relatively simple to drill holes with the pneumatic drill and pound the bolts home with a sledge hammer. The timbers which do not have a solid base to rest on are suspended in the proper position by ropes. We work on loose scaffold boards on top of the trestle most of the time, dodging the cables and chains which are used to hold the piles in alignment. So far no one has been hurt but it is rather dangerous work.

I would have enjoyed being with you so much Sunday. I know it must have been a lovely party. Your mother also wrote me a letter, which I received yesterday, telling me how nice a birthday Cecile had. Cile certainly seems to be developing a nice eye for business – asking for the additional four nickels for her fourth birthday. You'll have to mind your p's and q's with that little girl. She's not one to be trifled with, with her wonderful memory and her sense of justice. I know that she must be very proud of being in school at last. She has looked forward to it with great patience but I know that it has also been a trial to her to see Dorothy off to school every morning while she had to remain at home. I hope she will have an understanding teacher who can help her become adjusted quickly to her new environment. Of course being with Dorothy will, I hope, help her there. Try not to let them become jealous of each other. If they can continue to get along together as well as they have in the past each will be a great asset to the other. Tell Cecile for me that I hated having to miss her birthday party but that I couldn't leave the army long enough to get there. Tell her that I love her and miss her very much and that I hope she will be happy in school. Tell her to work and study hard so that she can soon learn to write letters to her daddy.

Mother writes that Bobby is going to try to visit you and me this week. I don't know whether or not he intends to drive. He may bum his way around in army airplanes. There is an army base here at Alex. Its time to go to work now so I must stop writing. Good bye sweetheart. I love you.

Hews

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February 24, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Dear Little Cile,

Mommy wrote me a letter and told me that you had a very nice birthday party last Sunday. I am glad that you and the other children had such a good time at your party. I wish that I could have been with you on your birthday but the army couldn't let me go long enough for me to come home. Since I can't come home to talk to you I decided to write you a letter to tell you something about how a little girl must act after she is five years old. You will find that being five years old is quite different from being four years old. You have been allowed to run around and play all day at whatever game suited your fancy, you could play indoors if you liked or outdoors if it wasn't raining. Now you are starting to school and you will find that that will cause many changes in your daily life. You are becoming a member of a new kind of family. Mommy and Mildred and Thelma and Grandma cannot go to school with you. Your teacher will take their place while you are at school. Your teacher will try to do everything for you that they do while you are at home. Whenever you want anything or need any help you must ask your teacher to help you. But you must help your teacher too. Remember always that she has many children to help. There are so many children at school for her to help that she will not always be able to stop what she is doing just to help you. You must be patient with her and do whatever she tells you to do. If she tells you to wait when you ask her for something you must go quietly back to your seat and wait until she has time to help you. You will soon learn the names of the other children in your class and you will find many good playmates among them. If you will always be a good girl and play nicely with them they will like you and you will make many friends. You must study hard darling and listen carefully to everything your teacher tells you so that you can learn quickly. Remember not to talk when your teacher is talking because you cannot hear what she is saying if you are talking. I am sure that you will like your teacher. Grandma wrote me that she had met your teacher and that she liked her very much. Now I must stop writing and get ready to go to work. Be a sweet girl and remember you daddy in your prayers. I love you very much and I miss you too. I hope that this war will soon end so that I can come back to you again.

Daddy

February 24, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

The weather here continues cloudy during the day and clear at night although there is no moon just now. We have had very little rain this week and the mud at the bridge is beginning to dry up a little. It is quite warm. The temperature must be at least 75 degrees. The birds are singing merrily all around me as I sit writing under the pines. This is more like late spring than the middle of winter. But I expect more cold weather before we see the last of this winter. It is quite pleasant though to be in the woods just now. In a day or two it will probably rain and turn cold and we will be uncomfortable again. But in the meantime we are very comfortable. At night we open the tent completely on one side and sleep quite in the open. Since I am working now from 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon until 9:00 o'clock at night I am allowed to do as I please in the mornings. I sleep until 9:00 or 9:30 in the morning then get up and read or write letters for a while before dressing. I generally wait until 10:30 or later to dress. Then I have my combined breakfast and lunch at 11:00 o'clock. Lunch is served early so that the cooks and k.p.'s can get out to the job in time to serve lunch there at 12:00. I do not eat again until 6:00 o'clock in the evening when supper is served on the job. After lunch I am free to do as I please until 12:15 when the truck leaves to take us to the job. It is quite luxurious to have the mornings free and I am enjoying it immensely. Last night after work we persuaded the truck driver to take us in for showers before we came back to camp. It certainly was refreshing to get under a warm shower again. We were all very dirty and very odorous. It was my second opportunity to bathe since we came out on bivouac. Our bivouac period is fast drawing to a close but so far there is no indication of what we are to do after we return to Camp Claiborne. I would not be surprised though if we continued the tactical training we were engaged in before. The training program was carried on during the furlough period as though everyone was there so each platoon has missed a substantial part of the training. I think that each platoon may review that part of the training which it missed during furlough. It is almost time to go to work now so I must go darling. I miss you terribly. Please try to visit me next week. I love you.

Hews

February 29, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Hello Sweetheart,

My trip back to camp was uneventful and I had plenty of time. I even managed to get a little sleep. The train was half an hour late leaving Shreveport but we pulled in to the station at Alexandria on time at 2:15 Monday morning. I dozed a little on the train but the car was brightly lit and a lot of people kept moving around so I didn't get much rest. At Alexandria I got in a taxicab with four other Claiborne soldiers and rode right to my company area. The taxi ride cost me a dollar and a half which I was glad to pay. I got to bed at three o'clock and slept until six. I spent the day Monday at the bivouac area with a cleanup squad. We had to fill ditches, latrine pits, fox holes, etc. and clean up the area. Not a very inspiring job. Today has been pretty easy. We had a little bayonet drill this morning but a hard shower of rain gave us a respite after half an hour of thrusts, jabs, slashes and smashes. The rain gave us a welcome rest for half an hour then we went into the dayroom and

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played a map game until noon. The map game was interesting and helped the morning pass quickly. Two men played the game on each map. Each man had a list of compass directions and distances or terrain directions. The object of the game was for each man to follow the path described in his list as though he was leading a patrol across country. This afternoon I read magazines in the day room for two and a half hours during a class in machine gun nomenclature which I had already had. The rest of the afternoon we had drill in setting up the machine gun in the field. Only one machine gun was available and only three men are required for the drill so I spent the time sitting around on the ground. It was lovely, in a very boring sort of way. Darling my visit with you and the children was wonderful. It was nice seeing Bobby and the folks again but to me they were just a convenient and very welcome opportunity to be with you. It was so nice to have you so much to myself with no job or Sunday school to interrupt us and to be able to go out whenever we wanted to without having to worry about the children. I couldn't keep my eyes off of you. I wanted you in my arms all the time. I love you very much sweetheart. I long for the day when we can be reunited, and can reconstruct our home. The time that we are apart will be an eternity for me but as far as our life together is concerned it will be only a period of dormancy. When a new spring finally makes its appearance for us our love will reawaken with greater vigor and promise. Those hardships that we must withstand now will serve us well as a great bond to bring us closer together all the rest of our lives. It's late now darling so I must go.

Goodnight

Hews

March 3, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.

Hello Sweetheart,

I think that I'm going to get a weekend pass this weekend so I can come home again. I surely do hope so. I'll have to leave early though. There have been a lot of men lately who have come in late on passes which expired at midnight. There have been a lot of crap and poker games too that lasted until the wee small hours and the c.o. has decided that he doesn't like it so I guess I'd better be a good boy and get back on time. If I get gigged now I won't stand a chance of getting a three day pass. My chances are so slim now that I don't dare do anything out of line. If I can make it to Alex. In time I will come down on the train and come back on the bus at noon Sunday. If I can get a ride into Alex. with one of the men in my company who has a car I may be able to catch the train. Especially if it's late as usual. We had a very unusual day today. We started the morning with a very brisk forty five minute session at bayonet drill. Then we had a lecture on demolitions and one on orientation, which lasted until noon. (The army's idea of orientation is a news bulletin about the progress of the war. (The newspapers do a better job.) After lunch we had close order drill until 2:30 P.M. then miraculously we were dismissed for the afternoon. Of course we were called out half an hour later to police up the company area and a little later we were required to clean our rifles, but that didn't take very long. I had a chance to just sit around and read my Reader's Digest for quite a while then I took a luxuriously leisurely shower before dressing for retreat. Retreat today was quite a session. After the usual retreat ceremony the colonel presented 'good conduct' medals to about one hundred men in the regiment who had been good boys for a year. The colonel was a 'stylish' fifteen minutes late during which time we stood 'at ease' and fumed in formation. Then we fumed at ease for another twenty minutes while the colonel talked it over with the boys and gave them ribbons – the medals are not available. It was all very boring. When the ribbons had all been distributed the regiment marched in review before the honorees and we finally returned to the company area. I went to a show after supper. I didn't know what was on and when I bought my ticket I didn't think to look at the advertising posters to see what was on so I was surprised no end when the title frame of "Tender Comrade" was flashed on the screen. It was the same show that Bobby and Mother and I saw together last Friday in Shreveport. It's a pretty good picture though so I stayed on to see it again. I enjoyed Leni's letter. Thanks for sending it on to me. Here it is back again. I especially like her signature "Leni, Eric, & 79/100". Cute, huh? It's late darling and I must get to bed. Goodnight, I love you.

Hews

March 16, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Darling,

I'm afraid this won't be much of a letter. We are waiting to be called out for a night tactical problem of some sort. No one knows just what we are going to do, as usual. It has been raining all day so I expect that it will be pretty messy running around in the woods tonight. We were told at noon that there would be a night problem tonight. Then about three o'clock this afternoon the commanding officer told us that the problem had been cancelled. At five fifteen, just as everyone was changing to O.D.s for early supper, we were told to change back to fatigues because the night problem was on again. We are scheduled to be in the trucks (at least we will get to ride part of the time) at seven o'clock complete with steel helmets, combat packs, gas masks, rifles, etc. etc. Today has been a big inspection day again. I worked in the mess hall all morning cleaning windows, scrubbing floors, etc. This afternoon I was cleaning rifles and carbines, cleaning the hut, and policing the yard until three o'clock. Inspection was from three until five. This inspection business is about the worst headache we have. We were told that a major or colonel from E.U.T.C. was to be the inspecting officer but he didn't show up so our C.O. made the inspection. What a let down. I hope to be home again this weekend. Goodbye darling, I love you.

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Hews

3/19/1944, Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

Dear Cecile

Wonder if you are enjoying the symphony with me. I have been writing letters while listening. I am on my fourth – pretty good for me.

I just had to write to Mrs. Kopman in answer to hers of this week. Last week I received a card from Marshall and he said his folks are living in Mena, Ark. I answered his card at once giving him Hews & Bobby's address so he sent them on to his mother. They have been there about six months. Marshall was called January 4th and has been at Camp Robinson awaiting assignment to his training station.

Today is just such a day as the Sunday you were here but that has not kept Dad from his garden. He got tomato plants from Mr. Parsons yesterday. They are about twelve inches big and he had to tie them to stakes as he planted them. Really too big but if we do not have a freeze or late frost he should have early tomatoes. People around here do not seem to be planting gardens as they did last year and the chicken raisers have lost their enthusiasm. Clara and Mr. Houston are just having their try at that sort of thing. They have a garden space big enough to provide several families. They have twenty five baby chicks and expect fifty baby turkeys next month. Brownie, the dog is sick and in the hospital. He has nervous distemper. So far their experience with dogs has not been so successful.

It was good to hear all of your voices. You know it did not take any longer to get you than if you had been in Shreveport. I am glad the children are well and doing well in school. They both sounded interested in their work. It is nice your mother could be in Washington at this time. There is so much of interest taking place up there these days.

You should see our wisteria, it is hanging almost to the ground with blossoms and so pretty. The perfume spreads over the entire yard. Spring is really a fine time of year and on sunny days I find it very difficult to stay indoors.

Well I have run down so will close for this time.

Love to all of you

Mother

3/21/1944, Apt. 105, 2702 Wisconsin Ave., Washington, D.C., Leona Bernhard (Grandma)

Dear Zoila, Cecile and Sam,



R-L Zoila Nelken, Melissa Nelken, friend

you do. No more now, except, much love to all my dear family – big & little. Do find time to write to me.
Mom

Lee has to go to New York for the dept. tomorrow, so we're going to make a holiday of it, too. We have a reservation at the Hotel Bristol, 48th and 7th Avenue, so in case of emergency, you can reach me there. We'll be in New York until Monday or Tuesday of next week. That is, the 29th of March.

It's snowing here, again, after a spurious spring. There were green tassels on most of the tree branches that are now encased in ice, and a cardinal woke me up last week. It almost made me homesick! You have all apparently decided that it is better for me not to hear much about what's going on in the family circle. I've only had one letter from each of you girls and none from my son! Grrrr

Haven't any of our cute children said or done anything remarkable since I left? I can't believe it. I made quite a hit with the story of Mike's promise to Dorothy (you tell me – and well run!) when I told to a couple of people who came to see us Sunday. By the way – it's a small world, indeed. A very charming bachelor who lives in this house came to see us Sunday and when he found I was just from N.O. wanted to know if I had ever happened to know the Behres. Then it turned out that he is originally from Vienna & knew some of Andy Mautner's folks there. His name is Rai Pollock, in case you see the Behres & want to mention it. I have to start packing now, as we are to leave early in the morning.

Enclosed find the key of the gas-tank of my car (my only one) and the buttons for your blouse, Cecile. Please mail my dickey. I can't wear my blue dress until

3/26/1944, Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

Dear Cecile

Have spent the afternoon writing to my children – surely wish I could write all the things I think of to tell all of you when I am about my work. Someone has suggested that I make notes through the day and be sure of writing everything I want to. A good thought but never seem to get started. You know since we have moved in some more filing cases, I am

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without a desk and really have no place to call my own. True there was very little time spent at the desk but at least it was a place to call home for my papers etc. We have had several changes lately and I feel as soon as we become adjusted we will work out space for necessary equipment. Mrs. Quigles called this morning and reported on her call to you and the children by phone during her visit in N.O. I am so glad to hear first hand from all of you.

Hews sent Baby Cecile's drawing to me and I am so proud of it and her star. Tell her I am going to keep it so I can show it to her when she is a big girl. She did nice work in many ways. I wrote Hews that my observations had led to the following conclusions. Dorothy will write fiction – due to her vivid imagination, Cecile will perfect the talent handed down from both her parents and Annette will be a singer her talent along that line already evident. Now just how far do you agree??

Met Francis Trichel at the Community Concert and she was asking about all of you. She expects Milton to go any time now. He has applied for a commission in the Navy but unless he hears soon it will be too late. She said Bill and Linna have bought in the 300 block of Columbia.

Wish you could see the Spirea hedge it is a bank of white against the hedge and is so pretty.

Well last Tuesday afternoon our office closed and we were sent out to check ceiling prices in grocery stores. I was lucky – four of the girls went with me in my car and we had four stores to check. We were finished in an hour and since we did not have to report back until morning we went shopping. I went in Rubensteins and they had just unpacked a new shipment of childrens dresses so I found three which looked like Easter so be on the lookout – will send them someday soon.

I must have spring fever – sort of tired and sleepy lately. Last night I went to bed before dark and thought I would be wide awake today but it didn't work because I am nodding now.

Mrs. Wallace says she has 33 turkey eggs setting now. With her and Clara both trying their luck at raising turkeys, we should have at least one next winter don't you think?

Love all my little girls for me and lots of love to you.

Mother

April, 1944 (after Easter), Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

Dear Cecile: It was sort of neglect and sort of laziness and sort of lack of time that your letter did not get off last week. I did enjoy talking with you so much and planned to write you the very next day. I don't think it is due to prejudice that you say your children were the prettiest in the Easter program. They really were I am sure. My how I would love to have seen all of you starting out that day but it gives me so much happiness to know Hews was with you. I am sure it helped both of you.

It has been two weeks since we have received a letter from Hews. I am wondering if he has gone to Sims, Texas yet. I ran to the front of the building one day last week when a convoy passed thinking he might be in it because it came from Alexandria way and went out the Mooringsport road.

Bettie wrote Grandma last week that they have received a card from Sidney and he says he is safe and well. My that is good news.

Mr. Houston's son is back in the States and expects to be home soon for thirty days. He may not have to go back hope not.

Bobby called last night. He is surely being kept busy. They have shortened the training at Smyrna from ten weeks to five. He has been there two weeks now so you see how time is flying. From his account of their schedule he scarcely has time to sleep or eat.

The roses and iris have been so pretty the past week. Our Silver Moon on the garage is in full bloom and is really lovely. The Paul Scarlet on the fence by Mrs. Schaefer's garage is a blaze of glory and shows up so pretty against the white.

Clara's turkeys and chickens are growing nicely. Her garden is mighty pretty too. I get the farm fever every time I go to see her. On the other hand don't believe Dad and I have the nerve to venture – Old 842 Elmwood has us for keeps I believe don't you?

Well we have been out for dinner and on the go all day. It has been a lovely day.

Love,

Mom

April 14, 1944, Simms, TX, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I can't write long tonight, it's too late. I hadn't written mother in two weeks so I wrote her a long letter tonight. We arrived at Simms, Texas at 4:00 o'clock yesterday afternoon and pitched our tents at 6:00 o'clock yesterday evening I was sent to the railroad yard with the unloading crew. We unloaded 160 tons of pressed steel runway planks in one ton bundles from three gondolas. We finished unloading at 11:30 last night and got to bed at 12:30. There will be six more carloads of the stuff but they haven't come yet. My three tent mates and I didn't have to work today so we spent the day improving our tent. We really fixed it up nice. First we built log walls 18 inches high all around the tent. We made the walls far enough apart so that we can lay down across the tent instead of lengthwise. Then we built a frame of poles to support the tent so we

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wouldn't have any poles inside the tent. Then we made a wide shelf of poles in each triangular end of the tent. Then we made a candle chandelier out of a tin can and some wire. We drove nails in the walls to hold our rifles. We have our personal things on the shelves and our barracks bags and packs in the space under the shelves. We have three times as much room as anyone else. Finally we dug a drainage ditch around the outside of the tent and banked the dirt up against the log sidewalls. Our place is the envy of the entire company and nearly everyone from the C.O. on down has been around to admire our work and compliment us. It was hard work but we have a very comfortable place. I also got some waterproofing compound from the water purification and waterproofed my shelter-half with it. I first christened our tent the "Simms Country Club" but I have decided to change it to "Military Manor". I had a wonderful weekend with you sweetheart and I love you very very much. Goodnight,

Hews

P.S. Write to me at Camp Claiborne as usual. They will forward your letters to me.

April 16, 1944, Simms, TX, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I had a new experience last night. I had my first drink of old fashion home made bootleg corn squeezings. We are in the middle of one of the 'dry' counties of Texas so, of course, bootlegging abounds. We are just nine miles from New Boston, which is a town of about 4000 population, and last night they sent three truckloads of us in to spend the evening from 6:00 until 11:00 o'clock. There is a large munitions plant near New Boston where about 500 soldiers are stationed so they have a U.S.O. club in town. The trucks let us out at the U.S.O. and we all congregated in the men's wash room where two of the men, who had been in the night before and knew the lay of the land, took up a collection to buy the corn squeezings. After about half an hour they came clanking back with their shirts full of bottles and innocent smiles on their faces. Another meeting was quickly formed in the wash room for the purpose of distributing the wares and I finally came into possession of my \$2.25 half pint of the good liquor. And it was surprisingly good. It had been cut a great deal with water and it was mild enough to drink easily without a chaser. I had one big drink at the U.S.O. then went to a restaurant and ate a big steak, price seventy cents. I had already eaten a pretty big supper at camp but the steak tasted mighty good. As I was walking away from the restaurant I met the boy who had bought the whiskey for us, accompanied by a middle aged frau and a little girl. He stopped me and told me that he and another boy from camp had been invited the night before to have supper with this lady. The other boy had not been able to get away from camp so he wanted me to take his place. Nothing else attractive had been offered to me so, without mentioning the two suppers I had already eaten, I accepted. They had prepared a wonderful fried chicken dinner with all the trimmings and I did surprisingly well with it, considering how much I had already eaten. I had two big pieces of chicken, potatoes and gravy, snap beans, biscuits, corn bread muffins, half a peach and two cups of coffee. I was so full I could hardly get up from the table. The people were very friendly and we spent a pleasant evening with them. They were not especially cultured people but they were plain honest small town folks doing their best to entertain us and I appreciated their efforts very much. During the course of the evening the half pint of squeezings disappeared. I had about half of it myself but I had eaten so much that I felt no effects from it at all. This morning I had no trace of a hangover. I have been taking it easy this morning except for an hour spent digging a latrine but I must go now and do some cable splicing. So good bye for now darling. I love you.

Hews

April 17, 1944, Simms, TX, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

Our mail finally caught up with us today and I got two nice letters from you which made the day a very pleasant one for me. I'm glad that my poem of love and admiration pleased you. I have yet though to find any basis for your self-evaluation of mediocrity. I have always found that you excel at any undertaking you take whole-hearted interest in. You have too brilliant a mind and too fertile an imagination to fail for any other reason than lack of interest. The greatest danger you face is allowing your interest to lag during periods of boredom or frustration. It takes a touch of genius to maintain a long range faith in ones efforts in such times, but I think that you have more than just a touch of genius.

We are having a pretty good bivouac here in Texas. The work has not been too arduous and the tactical side of soldiering has not been stressed too much. We have enjoyed clear warm weather during the day and clear cool nights. The last three carloads of runway planking were unloaded and installed on the runway today. If the wind is favorable tomorrow the airplane will take off. We may be able to take up the planking Wednesday and Thursday and return to Claiborne Friday. If so I may be able to get a weekend pass and come home again this weekend. A number of things could delay us though so don't expect me too hard. I didn't work in the railroad yard today. Instead I spent the day splicing steel cables at the blacksmith shop here in camp. I made ten eye splices in half inch diameter cable. The cable was old and very dirty so my clothes and I were filthy when I got through. I managed to get most of the grime off of my face and hands by washing first in gasoline then with g.i. soap and water and finally with toilet soap and water. It will certainly be a luxury to get back to Claiborne to a hot shower again. I am beginning to feel like Bathless Groggins. However this has been a pretty good

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bivouac and if I could ever get used to sleeping on the ground and not wake up with a back ache every morning I might enjoy it. I got a letter from mother today. She saw our motor convoy passing through Shreveport and came out on the sidewalk. She didn't see me though and I didn't see her either although I was standing up in the truck looking for her. She must have come out after my truck passed. I was in one of the first trucks in the column. I think that I shall read for a while now then go to sleep. It's hard to do anything else after dark than sleep. Candles don't furnish much light. Goodnight darling. I love you very much.

Hews

April 19, 1944, Simms, TX, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

The Liberator took to the air again yesterday at 12:30 p.m. It was quite thrilling to see the great plane start down the gently sloping runway we had worked so hard on. She started slowly down the 2500 foot long steel path with her great engines roaring their loudest then gradually her speed increased and the force of the wind against her wings became apparent as the impressions of her wheels became swiftly more shallow. Faster and faster she sped, still she hugged the ground as though reluctant to leave the spot that had offered her



succor in her time of great need. With growing apprehension we watched her approach nearer and nearer the end of a runway of which we had assured each other that at least 500 feet of its length were unnecessary. I am sure that each man was searching his conscience during those last few seconds of the take-off run, reviewing his part in the preparation for that moment to try and find any fault that might conceivably lead the great plane to destruction. It was the final fateful moment we had worked toward, the one and only chance for the crippled plane to return to the air, the moment of the final desperate effort for success, a moment when not more than twenty feet of the runway remained the tense gasps of the onlookers turned to cheers as the great plane lifted slowly and gracefully into the air, a tired proud queen lifting her head proudly into the familiar realm of the atmosphere once again. Then as she climbed steadily higher she began to turn in a great circle. She was nearly out of sight when she completed the turn and began to approach the field again in a flat glide which ended in a triumphant swoop low over our heads. The final salute of a gallant lady of the air to her earth-bound rescuers. Every eye stayed on the plane as it leveled off on its course, until it was no more than a tiny speck in the vast sky. There was no boasting of achievement among the engineer troops as they turned to the hard work of demolishing the steel plank runway. The uncertainty of the last tense moments of the take-off run was still too close and too real. But there was a secret little prayer of thanksgiving in each heart and a warm sense of pride in a hard job well done. By five o'clock in the afternoon half the steel planks had been removed from the runway and stacked neatly for shipping, by noon today the last plank was removed. Tomorrow morning we will start loading the railroad cars. I may get home Saturday yet. I love you,

Hews

April 21, 1944, Simms, TX, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I know now that I won't be able to be with you this weekend. Cleaning, painting, and bundling the runway planks has taken longer than I had hoped. There were several delays in obtaining paint, and steel straps for bundling the planks. The C.O. announced this morning that arrangements had been made for us to leave for Claiborne Monday morning at 7:00 o'clock. We will finish loading the gondolas about 10:00 o'clock tomorrow morning. After the last bundle has been loaded everyone who is not on special detail will be given a pass to leave the camp until 8:00 o'clock Sunday night. Unfortunately I have to do guard duty from 2:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. Saturday afternoon and from 2:00 a.m. until 6:00 a.m. Sunday morning so I won't get much time off. I have been a regular member of the rigging crew throughout the job and as such I was exempt from guard duty. Now that the job is ending I am the only member of the squad who has not been on guard so I'm automatically elected. It's just as well though. I couldn't get to Shreveport and I would rather save my money than to spend it on a weekend in Texarkana. I guess I'll go to New Boston Sunday and spend the day at the U.S.O. there. I have been fortunate this week in getting very little "lay hold-heave" work although I did have one hard day of it. I spent one day making cable splices, my army-acquired trade. I am, without boasting, the best cable splicer in the company. There are two others who have had the same training that I have had but I am the only one who has acquired sufficient skill in manipulating a marlin spike to be able to work it under the strands of the steel cable without using a hammer. When one uses a hammer on the spike he ruins the head of the spike and also often splits strands or the core of the cable which weakens the cable and makes a rough splice. For the past two days my duties have been as light as they possibly could. All I do is sit on the edge of a gondola car and count the number of bundles of planks that are loaded. I have to exert myself about once every ten minutes

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to the extent of writing down a number in my notebook. I'm actually getting bored. It's getting so dark that I can hardly see so I guess I'd better stop writing. Goodnight darling, I love you.

Hews

P.S. Please send me the last letter I wrote you about the take-off of the airplane. Just as an experiment I am going to writ-up our trip and submit it to the "Claiborne News" and I want to use part of that letter. I'll return it to you if you want it.

April 23, 1944 Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

Dear Cecile: Have just written both of my soldier boys and now my soldier girls come in for their share. You know when the boys get their plane for service they always name it. I have a name to suggest to Bobby when he gets a ship - guess what??? "Three Little Sisters" - Don't know if he will like it or you either. Another version comes in the form of a coined word "Anceldor." For the three names - He may already have something in mind - By the way his address is Lt. R.W. McCann, Student Officer Section, Class 44-4-W-S.A.A.F. Box 482 Smyrna, Tenn.

We received a letter from Hews this week and I do not wonder at our not receiving one sooner. He gave an account of all the marches and hard work he had been doing. They are really putting the men to strenuous physical tests. I was so excited the day his convoy passed our building. Of course I had no way to know it was his but something urged me to run to the front of the building but evidentially Hews was in one of the front trucks because I did not get to see him. I hope to see him when he goes back. Guess I had better call Mason and see if he can let me know when they get to town. He generally escorts them through town.

You should see the Silver Moon rose on the front of our garage. It has been full of bloom and is so pretty. I especially admire the beautiful yellow center. Our Paul Scarlet on the fence has been pretty too. Yesterday Dad went down by Smitherman's fence and cut a bouquet of pink roses that are so pretty. He sort of bug hunted - Ha. They resemble the wild rose but a bit deeper shade. We had a bad wind and rain storm last night. It is much cooler today and still pretty windy.

I received a letter from Mrs. Hopman last week. She has been put to bed for a three month rest due to nervous exhaustion. She has had her share of worry and trouble. Marshall is still at Camp Robinson Ark.

I did not look at Penny's about the curtain material but will try to one day this week. They had ruffled curtains in the window. Spring sort of has me ambitious to do a bit of painting and papering too.

Give my little girls a big Grannie kiss and lots of love to all of you.

Mother

full person in the world, I believe, and blessedly
 crazy enough to think I am something extra special.
 My room at the super-duper, fascinatingly co-
 mopolitan hotel, looks out on the most beautiful
 scene you can imagine. Just below my windows
 is a landscaped park at the edge of a sort of
 bay that spins into the Atlantic. It is ringed
 with a skyline of modernistic hotels & office
 buildings on the left, a beautiful airport directly
 ahead, and then a chain of rounded peaks,
 about which, to day, weathered clouds drift. All
 the pictures fall far short of the reality of
 this city's beauty. (My room ^{turning into a modern}
 the hotel is like those I've read & heard
 about in Europe on the fabulous days.
 On the first floor above the lobby is "the
 Salon" where people gather for coffee, for
 cocktails, or just to sit & watch the
 interesting people who pass. Every nationality
 is represented, & most of the passer-by
 are Ambassadors, or Gracils, or Latin Lights
 of the diplomatic circles.
 Half a dozen important people met us on
 our arrival. One of John's best friends is a
 handsome guy of Russian parentage who is
 not only the best known architect here, but
 also has some official rating which of
 sorts exactly understates but which made all
 my entrances smoother.
 At this point, guests were announced, and I
 went down to the "Salon". Last night we had

[illegible]

There are mail-carriers every two weeks in the shipping district. When only "small" blocks at $\frac{1}{2}$ cent per cup, — and they do a marvellous business all down.

Either has been so sweet to me. Shall ring me up every
 morning & has been entering in her efforts to simplify my
 induction into her new environment. I've pushed it up enough
 Portagues already to get my thickfast back up, & to take pictures
 to our people and meet my high schoolings in wonderful
 this & everything else. It's just amazing to find that any-
 one can be so really in love with me. He creates an
 illusion for me that I am just young & utterly
 charming — and do I revel in it & play up to it!

Wait until I tell you of the wonderful trip we are going to make. The government has loaned John a boat — a peace-time yacht that has been converted to government use for the duration. It has^a been sent up the Amazon from Belém, stacked with supplies for us, and on July 5, we shall fly from Rio to meet it, in a spot that few if any people have visited before, and then we shall live on it for about 10 days, cruising slowly down the river, through the jungle obscuring contours, currents, etc. There is a wireless on board, and twice a day we will communicate with the office in Belém of the ~~Indep'te Telecom de~~ ^{Cambio Brasileira da} ~~Comitas Rte. D'Amaz.~~ Democradora da quickly, you should want to reach us "Rua Nazareth #5".

We were married yesterday afternoon as planned, and had a very gay cocktail party. Eight of us went to the ~~Star~~ ^{Star} Calama Grill afterwards for dinner. It is amazing how, in a week, John's many friends have made me feel welcome here. As for John himself —

Picardo Janairo
dinner with John Thompson, former editor of the San Francisco "Telegraph" & able commentator. He is now making a survey of various aspects of South America. I wish I could tell you more about my John's work. It is simply enormous in its scope & possibilities, and I am very proud of him.

June 23

Yesterday I chatted with Esther Guimaraes, the very charming sister of Emory's Minder. The picture when I mentioned Emory's Minder, she picked up to complete my costume before I had to find shoes & gloves have had the most "opera house" interviews with the wedding Saturday. We sat under of the judge, by whom it develops, we must be married, feeling a clergyman. John's attendant will be Emory's Minder. I met Alberto Reis de Barros, the Co-ordinator, & another Co-ordinator of Brazil, and Esther Guimaraes & Mrs. Reis de Barros will be mine there for the about 15 guests & there, Mrs. Reis de Barros will be the first reads like the first page of "Rio", who, who it in the U.S. Consul Select: the Dutch Minister, John Thompson the new minister; the Deputy Governor, (son of Dr. Electric line) Mr. de Ch. Monte, (President) of the National City Bank; somebody in the from the American Embassy & a lot of others I cannot recall. We will be married in the French room of the hotel here - plenty of liquor & plenty of champagne.

The fact that we are being married only a week after my arrival is another example of John's faculty to getting the impossible done. We have ordered champagne and sandwiches, better than a wedding cake, & champagne - a cocktail bar. The matter of hotel expenses me. Est. will be perfection, but be. Thank me all of you well going to

Wednesday night, Enrique, Esther came here to dinner with us (he likes the food in Rio) and then took us to the Symphony concert at the Municipal Theater afterwards. I had a good view of the Cariocas on parade. Everyone promises during intermission, just as we do, and everyone sips Cataginas — tiny little cups of strong black coffee.

any minute I may wake up on
 Mornings street.
 You don't know how much I miss
 all of you, and how grateful I am
 for every bit of news from you.
 Cecil's nice letter to Mamma & Zola's
 that reached me today, and the one
 from Nettie made me very happy. So
 did letters from Aunt Edith & Aunt Cecile
 Alens that came a little while ago.
 Zola, - I have never paid the water
 bill on Mrs. Thornton's apartment, and
 I don't know what agreement I have with
 the receipt for the furniture sent to
 the Security Storage Co. have not arrived,
 please phone & ask for them. Ask them
 if they picked up the 3 chairs they were
 get from A. Morrow, (upholsterer) on
 N. Dargenio st. (or one of three sheets with a
 French name below Canal.) These were to
 have been sent with Leonard's load. Will
 you please, notify the office of Mr. Hegan, Rent
 Director, O.P.A. that Mrs. Thornton deducted from
 her rent (which is set at \$18.50 per month) &
 they will, I think, write to her.
 Good-bye - mother. In this little thingy place I am supposed to write
 to all the children & send them a letter & how happy we are

He is just a darling — and spoils
 me as I have never been spoiled
 before. You don't have to worry about your
 money — he even insists on holding
 my hand when we cross a street. (On
 when we don't!)

Well, we are officially uncommunicative
 as newly weds, we've preened out of the
 hotel this afternoon, walked downtown
 along the sea-wall, and saw "Phantom
 Lady" — a thriller, with Tranchot Lane
 as a garrotting gentleman.
 I have to get busy this week and
 get a couple of dark slacks sent, made
 for the boat-trip. These & my ~~new~~ Chambray
 dresses will do for the time and we spend
 on board and I shall take my two
 non-creasable mesh dresses along for
 our visits to Guaraya - Mirador, Porto Velho,
 Manaus, and Belém (where we get a plane
 back to Rio.) I still feel
 that it's all thrilling.
 as if I were in a dream, and that at

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April 25, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

We got wonderful news tonight after retreat. The first sergeant announced that arrangements were being made for the regiment to have furloughs again. A whole company at a time is going. Company C is scheduled to leave May 16. The arrangements are not yet complete but it is thought now that we will get ten days plus travel time. I guess that I will get either eleven or twelve days. I'm so excited about it that I could hardly eat tonight. Gosh! It will be wonderful to be with you that long. I hope your mother is not home. I just want to be with you. Of course it would be all right if Nettie and Aunt Felicia have us over for dinner once or twice and I would like to meet some of the people you have been having over lately but I most particularly just want to be with you as much as possible. This seems almost too good to be true. I hardly dare let myself hope for it or believe in it yet. Keep your fingers crossed for me. We had an uneventful trip home yesterday. As soon as we got back though we found that the battle of Claiborne was still on and that we were G.I. soldiers again. There was a training schedule posted on our bulletin board that required us to attend a night demonstration of chemical warfare agents. The c.o. tried his best to get us excused from it so we could get unpacked and put our things up but to no avail. We got back from the demonstration at 11:00 o'clock and had to work until twelve getting things straightened up. Tonight I am going to see a presentation of the light opera "Robin Hood" by the music college of L. S. U. at the sports arena here in camp. I've never seen it. I hope it's good. I have heard the L.S.U. glee club do some pretty nice singing so I expect that it will be all right. I am going to have to leave now so I can get to the sports arena by eight o'clock. Goodnight sweetheart, I love you very much.

Hews

April 27, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I received your letter enclosing those letters of mine which I asked you for. Thanks for sending them to me. I am going to try to write the article about our trip tonight. I hope it goes well. We are having a very dull time here after the excitement of our trip to Texas. We have just about exhausted the training facilities of Camp Claiborne and the officers are having a hard time finding enough things for us to do to keep us occupied all day. Our schedule for today ran like this. First an hour and a half of games, volley ball, soft ball, football, etc. which was followed by an hour of close order drill. Then we had an hour and a half before lunch to clean our rifles, packs, gas masks, tents, cartridge belts, canteen covers and mess kits. After lunch we had an inspection of arms, rifles and bayonets, for one hour then a two hour inspection of equipment and clothing in our huts. When that was over we had an hour to change clothes and get cleaned up for a dress parade at retreat on the E.U.P.C. parade field, which lasted until six thirty. It was a very G.I. day and we are all tired but we haven't accomplished a thing. Tomorrow I am on k.p. which will be a relief from the boredom of line duty. The operetta "Robin Hood" which I saw Tuesday night was very good. The voices, costumes, scenery, acting, music and all were quite professional and I enjoyed it very much. L.S.U. did itself proud. I am going to do my best to get home this weekend but I may not be able to make it. My company has guard duty Saturday night and Sunday and we have the regimental details Sunday. I am not on the guard roster but the details roster has not been posted yet and I may get a detail. Even if I do though I may be able to hire one of the men in the company to take my place. I'll get home if I possibly can without going A.W.O.L. I turned in an application to O.C.S. yesterday. Keep your fingers crossed for me. It wouldn't hurt if you had the children to ask God to help when they say their prayers. I want very much to be accepted. I must stop now and get to work on my article. Goodnight Sweetheart, I love you very much.

Hews

April 30, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

We are out in the woods again. Friday night we were told that the whole regiment was moving out Saturday to permanent bivouac. This meant that we had to take everything we had with us and leave our huts bare. I was on k.p. Friday so I didn't have time to do any packing Friday night although I did manage to get my field pack rolled. Saturday morning I had an awful time getting my things packed between jobs like packing tool trailers, supply trucks, mess trucks, etc. Every thing was finally ready to move at 10:30 yesterday morning so we loaded into the trucks and moved to the bivouac area, about three miles from Camp Claiborne. As soon as we got to the bivouac area we were put to work distributing and setting up pyramidal tents. Fortunately we were given enough tents so that only four men have to share each tent. This bivouac is quite different from all the other bivouacs we have been on. All the others have been tactical with dispersed and camouflaged tents. The tents here were pitched in straight lines on platoon streets and the tents are close enough together for adjacent tents to share the row of pegs between them. One of the men in my tent, Louis Hillock, was a tent mate of mine at Simms, Texas and it was he and I who fixed the tent up there. I told you about the log walls and shelves we built for our pup tent. Evidently we made a good impression with the ingenuity we displayed because he and I were detailed to work today at

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making a model tent as an example to the rest of the company of comforts that can be built into a tent by its occupants. Of course we were quite pleased by the detail and began to dream up all sorts of things we could build. We were given no materials except tools and nails. We were expected to get all materials by ingenuity and 'moonlight requisitioning'. Well our enthusiasm was dampened a little this morning. We had a cloudburst and hail storm with plenty of wind about 8:30 a.m. I had just started to ditch our tent when the storm broke. Half an hour later the storm had left us with two ripped seams in the top of the tent. We were soaked. The sun came out and soon dried us out though and we got to work. Tonight we have built two racks to tie barracks bags on, a clothes rack, a rifle rack, a large set of shelves, a packing box with more shelves, frames for mosquito bars, and several duck boards to hold shoes and small bags. Outside the tent I built a wash stand between two trees with two shelves and frames to hold three helmets. Our mirrors are nailed on the trees. We have really fixed the place up very nicely. All we need now is a tent. We will get another one tomorrow. And that is why I wasn't able to get home this weekend. Maybe next weekend. This damn army. Goodnight sweetheart, I love you very much.

Hews

May 2, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart.

I was a carpenter again today. But today, by virtue of my one stripe I was in charge of a detail of five men. This is the first time during my army career that I have been in charge of anyone. Yesterday I worked with and under a sergeant building shelves and racks in the kitchen tent. He and I worked until about 2:30 yesterday afternoon then we spent the rest of the afternoon wandering around watching other details work. It was a very pleasant afternoon. This morning I was put in charge of a detail to build a large wash stand to hold steel helmets and to build some benches for the platoon street. We also had to dig a large sump pit for the men to throw their waste water in. We worked intermittently between showers of rain until noon. We nearly finished the table, dug the sump, and cut and trimmed twenty saplings for the benches. At noon a heavy rain started that kept us in our tents all afternoon doing bunk fatigue. It was a very restful afternoon. A rainy day here has only one bad feature. We have an old tent and the storm we had Sunday opened three seams in the top of the tent so plenty of rain comes inside. We now have one pup tent pitched over a bed and another pup tent over our clothes rack. We had hoped to get another tent but they told us today that there are no more tents available so we will have to patch this one the best we can. They have patches, cement, and thread and needles in the supply room now so I'll have to get busy as soon as the canvas dries out. It will be a long job though to make this thing waterproof again. Today was payday again. I fell off a little this month, by fifty four cents. I don't know why that was deducted but I didn't even bother to ask. It will be another month before I will start getting my increase of four dollars per month. Mother told me in her last letter – that Bobby has finished his B-24 training and is expecting to be transferred to Boston, Mass. She thinks that he will receive more training though before being shipped across. I hope he gets the B-29 training he wants. Say what have you done about fixing up the children's room? Your plans sounded very attractive. Steel wool works just as well as sandpaper over old paint before repainting, but they are used to smooth the old coat not to roughen it. Go ahead and decide just what you want to do and I will work on it with you on my furlough. Well I guess I had better stop now while I still have time to write to mother. Goodnight darling, I love you.

Hews

May 4, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

Three cheers for mother. You're right it was quite a shock to hear that she is to be married again, I had to read your letter over about five times before I began to get used to the idea. But I'm all for it. I think its fine. It is certainly the best solution to all her problems. I'll bet she's glowing. I expect that there will be much speculation among the relatives about the change in her but I'm sure that no amount of speculation will lessen their surprise when mother announces her engagement. I wish I could be around too when she tells them. That should be quite a show. There will be an interesting study there in quick changes of expression. Well more power to mother for her triumph. I hope she will be very happy as Mrs. Bernhardt. I have bad news from this end of the line. Our blanket furloughs have been cancelled. They seem to have been cancelled because of a series of arguments between the company commanders and a captain in regimental headquarters named Savarese. The rules for the furlough required that no one who had been on furlough since Feb. 1 should be submitted for another furlough now. Several of the c.o.'s had been submitting borderline cases and had been arguing with Savarese about them. Savarese is a quick tempered guy and yesterday he blew his top and cancelled all furloughs. He had complete charge of the deal and all furloughs required his approval. It was a damn mean stunt for him to pull but there doesn't seem to be anything that anyone can do about it. This morning though it was announced that furloughs will be issued to those men who have accumulated ten days of furlough time. Morale hit a new low when that was announced because ninety per cent of the men are in the same fix I'm in or worse. We have accumulated only five to seven days each over our Christmas furloughs. At that rate it will be July before I will be able to get a furlough and there is no telling where we may be by then. This surely is a disgusted, griping bunch of men now. Two days ago we were in the best of spirits but it will be a long time

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now before we recover from this raw deal. We had no lights last night so I couldn't write. This morning it's raining again, it has rained every day this week, so we aren't working and I have time to write. I sewed the ripped seams in our tent and cemented them yesterday so we are able to keep dry now. Goodbye darling, I love you.

Hews

May, 1944, Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

Dear Hews: Just a line or two. I am so sleepy this afternoon and my mind is at a standstill. I am sorry your leave has been postponed again but so glad you are at least near N.O. and able to run home over the week end. Some times I believe the delay in getting your leave is good. At least it makes me feel more assured of your stay where you are for a little longer. Perhaps your leave will be just like the one you had earlier and not necessarily mean you are about to be moved somewhere.

I am glad the children have recovered. That is one thing off the list and without ill effects. I was always so glad when you boys passed through the childhood diseases lightly and with out too much discomfort. Having your tonsils out proved more serious than expected and I shall always feel Dr. Bean was not very thorough with his examination before he removed them. He may have saved you lots of suffering later if he had been. You know Bobby has to have his tonsils removed and I am so anxious that he have it done before he is sent across. He talked of having it done when he went back to Victorville but did not have time. With his present training schedule he may not be permitted to do it now.

I received a card from Marshall this week and he is now being trained in the infantry. You know he had been at the reception Center there at Camp Robinson for several months. He seems to like and says it is good for him.

Shreveport has been named by the Government as one of the cities with inflated real estate. You know people who rent are having so much trouble now. There is now no ceiling on rent and the landowners are really taking advantage of it. Philip Leiber has quite an article in the paper today saying people should not pay so much for property they are buying. He says the Building Loan cannot and will not loan enough money on the property to near cover the needs of those purchasing it. So many people have been forced to buy because of the rent situation.

We had a good time last night. Several of us in the gasoline department took our husbands and went to the Irvine camp for a fish supper. We all ate too much and laughed and had lots of fun over it. I think that is why I am so sleepy today. Just like a snake, have a full stomach and now I want to sleep.

We are looking forward to the time when we can all be together and hope to see Mrs. Nelken before she goes.

Love,

Mother.

May 14, 1944, Shreveport, LA, Albert Hews McCann, Sr. (Papa)

Dear Hews

Just finished dinner (Sunday) and I suppose mother had to outdo herself to give me a good Mother's Day dinner, not that it isn't good every Sunday but it was especially good today, chicken, string beans, potatoes and for desert big juicy prunes and home made cake, I hope and trust Cile did as well for you.

I still take my lunch to work and mother takes hers about half of the time, she gets tired doing it every day, the fellows at the office used to make fun of me taking my lunch to work, however since the war started there are quite a few that take lunches and we all gather around on the sixth floor and eat and gossip, I take a thermos bottle of milk and make out very well, we have a rather screwy work week now, Monday thru Thursday 7:45 A.M. to 5:30 P.M Friday 7:45 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. and Saturday 7:45 A.M. to 11:45 A.M. with 45 min. off every day for lunch, you will note this adds up to 48 hours, formerly we worked six eight hour days, the girls were the greatest kickers of this schedule as they found no time to spend their money, the greatest objection to the new schedule is the long 9 hr. day for four days, this is rather hard on those Addressograph machines for a man of my age, but I enjoy the half Saturday.

So glad you are to get a furlough and be home with your family without rushing right back. Mother and I enjoyed talking to you this morning, that was a real mothers day present, much better than a present, I don't know yet whether we will be able to get down there with you or not, we will just have to wait and see how things develop, the synagogue has a confirmation class service on the last Sunday of this month and they are counting on me to be there, they are real short handed on the quarter, Earl Bellow is recovering from Pneumonia and will probably not be there, this will be our last month until next fall.

I am off next week on my vacation, I thought for a while it would coincide with your furlough, but you said on the phone it had been changed to the 27th. I believe, so glad all of your little family are well, kiss big and little Cile, Dorothy and Annette and tell them Papa wants to see them.

Love, Dad

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

May 16, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

This has been a very eventful day. At eight o'clock this morning the second battalion, half of the regiment, left for New Orleans. They are going to do about one week's worth of some kind of flood control work in the vicinity of N.O. I don't know exactly where they are going or what they are going to do but I surely do wish I was with them. This just leaves two companies in camp since A company is on furlough. Now B company and C company must stand guard alternately. We must also alternate being the riot alert company. So one day C company is on guard and the next day we are alerted and no one can get a pass. There is no chance of getting a weekend pass this week unless the second battalion gets back by then which doesn't seem likely. There is a wild and unsupported rumor today tho that our furlough time is going to be changed from the twenty ninth to the twenty second. If it is going to be changed there will probably be an official announcement tomorrow. This should give you and Consolidated a pretty good idea of army efficiency in handling the affairs of the g.i. soldier. I hope they don't change the time. Mother wrote me that she and dad are planning to come to N.O. on the second of June which would be too late if I leave on furlough on the twenty second. I'll write her as soon as I know definitely. I had my o.c.s. interview this morning. I'm afraid that I didn't make a very good showing. I had to stand up before the board of officers and a group of applicants and make a speech about "why you think you would make a good engineer officer". When I started talking I was taken with a bad attack of stage fright and got very nervous. I didn't stutter but I'm afraid that I was neither coherent nor forceful. I don't know how I made out and I probably won't for some time but I won't be surprised if I didn't pass. We have a twenty mile hike scheduled for tomorrow so I'm going to bed early. Goodnight darling, I love you,

Hews

P.S. Here is a letter from dad I thought you might enjoy.

May 18, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I haven't much time for letter writing tonight. I have spent the evening reading a mystery novel instead of writing to you as I should have. Our furlough date has not been changed. The rumor was partly true tho because the date was changed from the twenty ninth to the twenty second for the band members. I have, by accident I'm sure, been put on permanent detail as one of three carpenters who are working at the officers club in Camp Claiborne. We assembled twenty seven restaurant tables and covered them with linoleum. Now we are installing a five foot wainscot in a big game room. Then we have to build some lockers and racks and install a big kitchen exhaust fan. It's a very nice detail because we are excused from k.p. etc. while it lasts. I hope it lasts. Goodnight sweetheart, I love you. I'm afraid that I won't be home this weekend.

Hews

May 21, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

No news yet from the o.c.s. interview. It will probably be about three weeks before their decision is announced. Six men who had their interviews about three weeks ago were told yesterday that they had been accepted for o.c.s. They are

Shreveport, La.
May 14, 1944.

Dear Hews:

Just finished dinner (sunday) and I suppose mother had to outdo herself to give me a good mother's day dinner, not that it isn't good every sunday but it was especially good today, chicken, string beans, potatoes and for desert big juicy prunes and home made cake, I hope and trust Cile did as well for you. I still take my lunch to work and mother takes hers about half of the time, she gets tired doing it every day, the fellows at the office used to make fun of me taking my lunch to work, however since the war started there are quite a few that take lunches and we all gather around on the sixth floor and eat and gossip, I take a thermos bottle of milk and make out very well, we have a rather screwy work week now, Monday thru Thursday 7:45 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. Friday 7:45 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. and Saturday 7:45 A.M. to 11:45 A.M. with 45 min. off every day for lunch, you will note this adds up to 48 hours, formerly we worked six eight hour days, the girls were the greatest kickers of this schedule as they found no time to spend their money, the greatest objection to the new schedule is the long 9 hr. day for four days, this is rather hard on those Addressograph machines for a man of my age, but I enjoy the half saturday. So glad you are to get a furlough and be home with your family without rushing right back, mother and I enjoyed talking to you this morning, that was a real mothers day present, much better than a present, I don't know yet whether we will be able to get down there with you or not, we will just have to wait and see ~~how~~ how things develop, the synagogue has a confirmation class service on the last sunday of this month and they are counting on me to be there, they are real short handed on the quartett, Earl Bellow is recovering from Pneumonia and will probably not be there, this will be our last month until next fall. I am off next week on my vacation, I thought for a while it would coincide with your furlough, but you said on the phone it had been changed to the 27th. I believe, so glad all of your little family are well, kiss big and little Cile, Dorothy and Annette and tell them Papa wants to see them.

Love Dad

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leaving the company tomorrow to go on furlough; at the end of their furloughs they will report to Fort Belvoir to start their training. I would like very much to go to o.c.s. but I won't be too disappointed if I don't make it this time. I will have an opportunity to apply again later on and I think that next time I will not be so self-conscious and stage struck as I was this time. I never am self-conscious regardless of whom I am talking to or the subject I am discussing except when I have to talk about myself without feeling that I was boasting and putting on airs and that feeling always makes me self-conscious and a little shy. Next time though I will have a better idea of what to expect at the interview and I will be able to prepare myself for it with a little more intelligent foresight. I was on guard duty last night as "water point guard" at the regimental water purification plant. The equipment is set up on the bank of a little stream about a mile and a half from our bivouac. There was one other guard on duty with me. We were supposed to guard alternately all night and I took the first watch while he went to sleep. I didn't feel very sleepy so I stayed up until one o'clock when a big sow wandered into our tent and I woke him up chasing her out. Then I went to bed and he stayed up. I gave him my watch and flash light so he could awaken me after two hours but he went to sleep again on the ground and neither of us waked up until the water purification crew came at seven o'clock this morning. I have been off duty all day. I washed a lot of clothes this morning so it rained all afternoon, natcherly. Good night darling, I love you.

Hews

May 28, 1944, Shreveport, LA, Hews McCann, Sr. (Papa)

Dear Hews Jr.

Your voice seemed so close when you called long distance today, just like you might have been next door, well that was a surprise to hear that you were not on your vacation excuse me I should have said furlough, I will have to cancel my day off next Saturday from the office and make it at some later date, it was a rather bad time for me to be off as it was at the beginning of a new royalty period, my what a grind it is for about ten days, I really hit the ball, none of the girls would have my job on a silver platter.

I had a rather busy morning, I had to be at B'Nai Zion Temple at 10 for a confirmation class, I stayed until about 10:45 and then lit out for Kingshighway to direct the choir there, I was not worried as I had a women's trio sing the special number, however I hate to be late, the music went very well, I will sing all of next month at the Synagogue, rather unusual, due to a new Rabbi that is coming and I suppose they want to help him as much as possible with music.

I wish you could see my garden, it is beautiful I have about 50 of the prettiest tomato plants you ever saw, perhaps I can send Cile one even larger than the one last summer, I have lots of snap beans and butter beans coming on so we should have plenty of vegetables for the summer.

Glad to hear that Cile and the children are all well, so glad they moved you so close to N.O. that was a break, it will save you some money going to see them on Sunday.

I suppose Bobbie is in the thick of his training now, I suppose he feels real important to have a crew under his supervision, I didn't think he had it in him, more power to him, I imagine he has at least 3 more months of training before he goes across, perhaps the war will have ended by that time.

Keep us posted as to when you will get your furlough, suppose it will be some time in June.

Love

Dad

May 31, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

It's pretty hard for me to do any letter writing here. I am on duty every afternoon from the time we quit work until eight o'clock as life guard and swimming instructor in our pool. I have one class of four beginners, men in my company who can't swim a stroke. I have another class of seven dog paddlers who are working on the Australian crawl. They all seem to be satisfied with the instructions I'm giving and I'm having a good time at it. All of them are improving a lot too which makes me feel good.

It surely was nice having you and the children drive me back to camp Sunday. I think the kids enjoyed it too. It's so dark now that I can't see what I'm writing so I guess I'll have to stop. I hope you can read this. I love you very much,

Hews

June 25, 1944, Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

Dear Hews,

Is it hot at night there? We have had hot nights so Daddy and I put up the cots on the front porch and slept out there last night. It is nice and cool there and with the shrubs we felt private too.

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Surely put in a hard week, so short of help. Yesterday topped it off with another window girl out sick. I felt as though I needed roller skates to get around faster. We have been so hot down there but yesterday they started installing three big ventilator fans so we hope to have relief.

Things are pretty dry again – the sun drinks up the moisture so fast and everything looks thirsty. We are getting lots of nice tomatoes now.

Bobby keeps asking me to send some gas coupons to him. He says the boys with cars cannot get gas to go to town – well there are certain obstacles such as records etc which prevent me doing it but I would like to help them out. I heard a rumor lately that gas rationing would be lifted in another month. If that is true guess I will be a lady of leisure again. I don't believe it because we get new regulations daily.

I notice in today's paper where army jeeps are soon to be for sale second hand at \$600.00 as is or \$750.00 repaired and with a guarantee. What is the advantage of a jeep? Do we want one you think???

Expect it has been hard to get back in a military spirit after your pleasant visit at home with your family. Bobby has always said he had trouble getting enthused after being home. Of course the army don't pay any attention to that and break one in at once and without ceremony. Have you had any news of OCS?

There is nothing to write about today or perhaps I am too stupid to think. This was Dad's last Sunday at Kingshighway thank goodness. I expect I will be a heathen the rest of the summer. Miles Grandma makes me go so she can go.

Son we like to hear from you so write when you have time.

Love,

Mother

June 22, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Darling,

I received your expensive letter today and the nice letters from mother and dad which you enclosed. Your letter was so nice tho, and I enjoyed it so much that it was quite worth \$10.00. In fact if I had to appraise your letters intrinsically I am afraid I would place them far beyond my financial means, present or prospective. I had a pleasantly uneventful trip back to camp and checked in at the orderly room at nine thirty Tuesday night. There was a nice accumulation of fat juicy rumors waiting for me when I arrived: "The outfit is hot again and it's the real thing this time"; "When the orders came through for the outfit to move they started to telegraph everybody to return immediately but at the last minute they got the date postponed"; "We must be going someplace cold because everybody has to turn in his suntans. They're going to issue each G.I. five sets of O.D.'s instead"; "I'll bet we're going to the Aleutians"; "I'll bet we're going to Alaska"; "I'll bet we're going to Iceland"; "I'll bet we're going to Greenland"; "I'll bet we're going to work on the Aleian highway"; "Everybody has to be back from furlough by July 15"; "We're leaving August 1st". There was an occasional, "I'll bet we're going to Italy or England or France", but they aren't taken seriously. It's the most consistent set of rumors I've seen yet. They are substantiated by an order today which calls for one week of review of basic training in preparation for tests by the 8th Service Command Headquarters Staff. We had similar tests last February when we were so hot. Actually the rumors have not been confirmed by any official announcement and two more companies left on furlough yesterday but there is certainly much in the wind. The army wasn't a bit slow about putting me to work again. I was on k.p. yesterday until five o'clock in the p.m. when I went on guard until five o'clock this p.m. Tomorrow I am on the regimental provost detail which, if you've forgotten, removes garbage and trash, polices the streets, and does other similarly pleasant little chores. This is the same army I left. We pull guard every three days now because so many companies are on furlough. We get it next on Sunday night so I may not be home this weekend or next but I will if I can. I can and do love you,

Hews

P.S. Very very much!!! P.P.S. The little feller is quite well now, thank you.

6/25/1944, Shreveport, LA, Hews McCann, Sr. (Papa)

Dear Hews

Well how are you making out on these hot 96 degree days, it sure is plenty hot, I know it must be terrific at your camp, I know it must have been hard for you to leave your little family at N.O. and beat it back to camp, my but wont we all be glad when the war is finally over and we can all live our normal lives again, it has been a strain on everyone I think, everything is so artificial, so much work and overtime which means more money for what please tell me, last Saturday when we bought our groceries at the A & P they had no paper bags, I tried to buy a pair of trousers Saturday and M. Levy only had one pair that would fit me, we are really beginning to feel the war now and it will probably get worse later on, I suppose after a while the only thing we can buy will be Bonds, however if that is what it takes to win I am in for it, I think Cile has done mighty well to carry on with three little girls, she is a mighty good mother.

This was my last Sunday at Kingshighway, Dr. Reed did not seem to shed many tears over my leaving, I think he hopes I will continue to sing but I wouldn't want to do that with Bert Dueringer there, I think it better that I sing at St. Marks, I

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know the music there and I will feel at home as I sang there so many years, I think I was about eight when I went into the boys choir, I often look at the old pictures they have, I think the oldest was taken in 1904, forty years ago.

B'Nai Zion Temple is giving us a two week holiday (first half of July) with pay, the new Rabbi is due to start on the third Friday in July so we go back on that date, this is the first time we have ever sang right thru the summer, the holiday music will start about the 15th of Sept. and we will be plenty busy at that time, I will take part of my vacation at that time so I can sing Yom Kippur (all day).

We are so anxious to hear where they will send you next, I suppose it will be quite a distance from home, you sure have been lucky so far, I suppose mother told you Bobby will finish his training about the 28th of July, I suppose he will be ready to go across then, we dread to think about it, lets hope it will be over before either of you boys have to go.

Love

Dad

June 25, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Why We Fight

by:

T/5 A. H. McCann, Jr.

June 25, 1944

Why do we fight? What is this terrible thing that has caused us to leave our homes, our loved ones, our careers for the horrors of war? We are no nation of aggressors. We seek no foreign empire. Of all the nations on this earth ours has been the most wholehearted in the pursuit of peace and freedom for all peoples regardless of race, creed, or color.

It is said by some that we fight to protect the vested interests of American corporations yet we did not fight when American properties were seized in Mexico or when American interests were jeopardized in China. Others say that the politicians have forced the war on the people. That 'power politics' are responsible. Yet all the efforts of the politicians were aimed at appeasing the aggressor nations, attempting by every possible means to isolate this nation from the caldrons of hate and covetousness in Europe and in Asia. I believe that these vague and generalized reasons that are so often heard in one form or another evade the more homely, yet vital reasons why we fight!

Leaving home and the loved ones there, abandoning the careers of peace for the careers of violence and hardship of war are very personal things for each of us and the reasons for our decisions must be very personal also. The reasons must be rather emotional than material too, to enable us to endure the emotional upheaval of abandoning the pursuit of peace for the pursuit of war. War is a very personal thing to each individual involved in it.

In my own individual case the burden of deciding whether or not I should become personally involved in this was as a soldier was laid on my own conscience. The laws of conscription did not require me to become a member of the armed forces. Consequently I have devoted much thought to the pros and cons of why I should fight. Perhaps the things that decided the issue for me will help others to see more clearly 'why we fight'.

I fight because I believe that what I read in the newspapers is the honest and considered opinion of the writer and not the result of coercive planning designed to deceive me on any issue. I believe this whether I agree with the opinion or not. I believe that all phases of important issues are fairly and honestly set forth in the newspapers I read.

I fight because I like to go to my church and worship God in my own way. I fight because I think that you like to have that privilege too and because I want you to have it whether your way resembles mine or not.

I fight because I like to argue and discuss with my friends any topic that may be mutually interesting to us. I like to be able to express my opinions freely without fear of coercive action from anyone. I like to be able to discuss and criticize my government, my church, my employers, my friends. I think you like to have that privilege too and I want to help you keep it.

I fight because I believe that the achievements to which I can attain are limited only by my own abilities and my own initiative. I believe that my country and its way of life and its laws insure that belief. Certainly our history substantiates it. That belief.

I fight because I believe that these rights and privileges are in danger of being denied to me and to you by people who have never fully enjoyed them as we have and who therefore cannot appreciate them, may even fear them. Much as I hate war I cannot stand idly by and allow my fellow men to sacrifice themselves to protect those privileges for me. I too must do what I can to help.

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

June 26, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

Gosh, but it was nice to talk to you and the children yesterday. Next to being with you, talking to you on the phone is the pleasantest thing I can think of. But it's a poor second at that. I had a pretty good weekend in Alex tho. Isidore & Rosalie were wonderful hosts. They didn't keep me up late Saturday night and they left at 5:30 Sunday morning for Lafayette, leaving me alone in their apartment with a free hand to do anything I liked and stay as long as I liked. I had to rewrite the essay on 'Why We Fight' that I wrote at their house. The first draft for you had had 630 words and we are limited to 500. Here is the first draft for you to read. The parts which are circled in pencil are the parts I had to eliminate. Would you be willing to give me a \$100 war bond for it? Well anyway I hope that the judges of the contest will! Our C.O. gave us a talk today about leaving. He doesn't know any definite details about when and where we are going but he did say that it was pretty definite that we would move sometime in the near future. He did say one interesting thing though. He said that when we move we will be issued the new duffle bags to replace our barracks bags and that everything we took with us would have to go in that bag and one piece of personal luggage. He said that other than that there would be no restriction on what we could take. I have a lot of books and extra clothes that I want to hang on to so please get me a nice big substantial handbag to carry them in. If possible have my name (not initials) and army serial number stamped on it. This is something that I think I will need badly. I don't want a small trunk or anything like that but a regular handbag. Leather would be best if it isn't too expensive. That black case of mine is too boxy and to flimsy. Goodnight sweetheart, I love you very much,

Hews

P.S. I had to come back to camp yesterday in a taxi at \$7.50 because I missed my ride with the g.i. that I usually ride in with so I'm broke. Please send me \$10.00. I may be able to get off next weekend yet.

Hews

July 4, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello my Darling,

It was wonderful being with you this weekend. I am always a little worried and afraid on my way home because I can never quite believe that anything as wonderful as my memories of the previous trip can possibly be so. But it always is. The perfection of our love surpasses my dreams. I long for the peace that will allow us to be joined again, to continue to build our life together. Meanwhile your love sustains me through all trials. I love you very dearly.

My trip home was uneventful. The train wasn't nearly as crowded as usual because we weren't paid until Monday. I had a seat all the way although there were a few standing. We had a full schedule yesterday and I was too tired to write last night. I was asleep by seven thirty. I had a very uncomfortable seat on the train and was unable to sleep. They made me a school teacher yesterday afternoon. I have a class of ten men in rope and cable splicing. They are all taking a lot of interest in the work and are catching on quickly. I am enjoying the sessions too. Everyone was very surprised when quitting time came. We are supposed to have a ten minute break every hour but they were so interested in their work that they didn't notice when the time came for a break all afternoon. That made me feel good because it was the first class I have been in where the clocks weren't watched diligently by everyone. We had a big fourth of July parade all morning then had the rest of the day off. Twenty thousand men marched in rows of twenty seven men past the reviewing stand at the parade ground in Camp Claiborne. It was quite a show. I must stop now and clean my rifle. Goodnight sweetheart, I love you,

Hews

April 23, 1944 Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

Dear Cecile: Have just written both of my soldier boys and now my soldier girls come in for their share. You know when the boys get their plane for service they always name it. I have a name to suggest to Bobby when he gets a ship - guess what??? "Three Little Sisters" - Don't know if he will like it or you either. Another version comes in the form of a coined word "Anceldor." For the three names - He may already have something in mind - By the way his address is Lt. R.W. McCann, Student Officer Section, Class 44-4-W-S.A.A.F. Box 482 Smyrna, Tenn.

We received a letter from Hews this week and I do not wonder at our not receiving one sooner. He gave an account of all the marches and hard work he had been doing. They are really putting the men to strenuous physical tests. I was so excited the day his convoy passed our building. Of course I had no way to know it was his but something urged me to run to the front of the building but evidentially Hews was in one of the front trucks because I did not get to see him. I hope to see him when he goes back. Guess I had better call Mason and see if he can let me know when they get to town. He generally escorts them through town.

You should see the Silver Moon rose on the front of our garage. It has been full of bloom and is so pretty. I especially admire the beautiful yellow center. Our Paul Scarlet on the fence has been pretty too. Yesterday Dad went down by

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

Smitherman's fence and cut a bouquet of pink roses that are so pretty. He sort of bug hunted – Ha. They resemble the wild rose but a bit deeper shade. We had a bad wind and rain storm last night. It is much cooler today and still pretty windy.

I received a letter from Mrs. Hopman last week. She has been put to bed for a three month rest due to nervous exhaustion. She has had her share of worry and trouble. Marshall is still at Camp Robinson Ark.

I did not look at Penny's about the curtain material but will try to one day this week. They had ruffled curtains in the window. Spring sort of has me ambitious to do a bit of painting and papering too.

Give my little girls a big Grannie kiss and lots of love to all of you.

Mother

There are mobile-controlled coffee-shops every few blocks in the shopping district where only milkshakes are "small" "black" at 1/2 cent per cup, — and they do a million business a day.

Earlier he has so sweet to me. She rings me up every morning & has been entering in long efforts to simplify my induction into this new environment. I've picked up enough Portuguese already to get my breakfast and up to the police to see people and meet my neighbor. He's a wonderful person & everything else. I'm just enjoying the idea that any one can be so really in love with the people that any illusion for me. He's a real guy & I'm quite young & really charming — and do I need in my life to play up to it!

Wait until I tell you of the wonderful trip we are going to make. The government has loaned John a boat — a peace-time yacht that has been converted to government use for the duration. It has a crew of 30! It has been sent up the Amazon & stocked with supplies for us, and on July 5, we shall fly from Rio to meet it in a spot that few if any people have visited before, and then we shall live on it for about 10 days, cruising slowly down the river, through the jungle, observing currents, etc. There is a wireless on board, and twice a day we will communicate with the office in Belém of the ~~Department of the Interior~~ ~~the~~ Comissão Brasileira de Democrazia da Uniao Brasileira. If you should want to reach us quickly, you should cable that office, adding the address "Rua Nazareth 45".

We were married yesterday afternoon at 4 o'clock, as planned, and had a very gay cocktail party. Eight of us went to the Opacalana grill afterwards for dinner. It is amazing how, in a week, John & many friends have made me feel welcome here. As for John

Sunday, June 25th

Ricardo Juncos

dinner with John Thompson, former editor of the San Francisco "Telegraph" & radio commentator. He is now making a survey of various aspects of South America.

I wish I could tell you more about my John's work. It is simply enormous in its scope & possibilities, and I am very proud of him.

Yesterday I stopped with Esther Juncos, the very charming sister of Enrique Menden. The architect whom I mentioned before. I had to find about 5 places to complete my collection for the wedding Saturday. We have had the most "opera buffa" interviews with the various satellites of the judge, by whom it develops, we must be married, finding a clergyman. John's attendants will be Enrique Menden, I just Alberto Rios de Barros, the Co-ordinator, assistant Co-ordinator of Brazil, and Esther Juncos & Mrs. Rios & Barry will be mine. There will be about 15 guests & they were on husband & child U.S. Consul Sublet; H. E. Daniels, the Dutch Minister; John Thompson, the new Commissioner; the Deputy Governor (Mr. J. de Oliveira); John Thompson, the Minister (Menden) of the National City Bank; somebody else from the American Embassy & a lot of others I cannot recall. We will be married in the finest room of the hotel here — plenty of Equis; brocade in the decor — at 8 p.m. or thereabouts. The fact that we are being married early & quiet after my arrival is another example of John's peculiarity to getting the parties going. We have named camps, and "sardines" & "petals" for a wedding cake, & champagne & a cocktail for the mother & later. Esther Juncos & I will be perfect, but be with me. I wish all of you were going to

Wednesday night. Enrique, Esther Juncos has to dinner with us (the place has the flat roof in Rio) and then took us to the Symphony concert at the Municipal Theater afterwards & I had a good view of the Caracaras on parade. Everyone promises during intermission just as we do, and everyone says "Café" — tiny little cups of strong black coffee.

any minute I may wake up on
Mornings street.
You don't know how much I miss
all of you, and how grateful I am
for every bit of news from you.
Cecile's nice letter to Mamma & Zola's
that reached me today, and the one
from Nettie made me very happy. So
did letters from Aunt Edith & Aunt Cecile
Alens that came a little while ago.
Zola, - I have never paid the water
bill on Mrs. Thornton's apartment, and
I don't know what agreement I have with
the receipt for the furniture sent to
the Security Storage Co. have not arrived,
please phone & ask for them. Ask them
if they picked up the 3 chairs they were
get from A. Morrow, (upholsterer) on
N. Dargenio st. (or one of three sheets with a
French name below Canal.) These were to
have been sent with Leonard's load. Will
you please, notify the office of Mr. Hegan, Rent
Director, O.P.A. that Mrs. Thornton deducted from
her rent (which is set at \$18.50 per month) &
they will, I think, write to her.
Good-bye - mother. In the thingy place I am supposed to write
to all the children how much I love and how happy we are

He is just a darling — and spoils
me as I have never been spoiled
before. You don't have to worry about your
money — he even insists on holding
my hand when we cross a street. (On
when we don't!)

Well, we are officially uncommunicative
as newly weds, we preened out of the
hotel this afternoon, walked downtown
along the sea-wall, and saw "Phantom
Body" — a thriller, with Tranchot Lane
as a garrotting gentleman.
I have to get busy this week and
get a couple of dark slacks sent, made
for the boat-trip. These & my ~~new~~ Chambray
dresses will do for the time and we spend
on board and I shall take my two
non-creasable mesh dresses along for
our visits to Guaraya - Mirador, Porto Velho,
Manaos, and Belém (where we get a plane
back to Rio.) I still feel
that I am all thrilling.
as if I were in a dream, and that at

7/7/1944 Hotel Gloria, Rio de Janeiro, Leona Nelken Bernhard

Dearest Cile, -

It was such a pleasure to find your letter – and it was such a nice letter!

This will have to be a skimpy one, because I have promised myself to answer everybody before we leave on our trip to the Amazon early to-morrow morning. I am enclosing a picture of the yacht, which the Brazilian government has loaned to us, in which has a complement of 30 men! John and I will be the only passengers. I feel like Cleopatra, or the Queen of Sheba. (No, her barge was a cancel.)

I have started three letters to you before this one, hoping to get one to you, with the enclosed check for a dress and hat before your birthday. But if you think it is easy to write letters with a husband like mine who is always brimming over with stories he wants to tell me, or suggestions that we have a drink, or tea, or go someplace at once! You've reckoned without my host! He is such a darling! But I assure you, tho my name is no longer of the "Nelken menagerie", my motto is still the one Doris wished on us – "Never a dull moment."

I hope you have a happy birthday – which means of course that Hews either manages to get home for it or to talk to you. I'll send you a cable, as my representation!

Hope the tonsilleotomies will be uneventful. You know I wish I could be with you at Touro; and that I'll be anxious to know how things went. Our address for mail is still Gloria Hotel, as we're due back here about August 25th. Meantime, there is a wireless set on board the Tocatrns and any urgent message can be relayed to us if cabled to Commicão de Demarcação de Limites, Rua Nagareth, Belem-Para, Brasil, S.A.

Last night I dreamed there was a knock on the door & when John opened it (he does all that sort of thing for me!) there you all were, - all my children & grand children, come to visit me! No! I'm not exactly homesick, because everything is so wonderful & especially John! But I surely would like to see you all!

No more now, as I want to put several enclosures in this envelope.

Lots and lots of love darling, and a hug and kiss for each of our girls. Hope Hews is kept on this side of the water. I think of him every morning when I read the newspaper, (in Portuguese, believe it or not! Write as often as you can too.

John enjoyed your letter so much. He sends his love, too.

Mother



July 11, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Darling,

What a perfectly wonderful time I had with you this weekend. I'm still aglow. And after the glow has been dulled by this unsympathetic army existence there will remain always the warm comfort of the memory of your magnificent love. Nothing could ever penetrate the wall of protection that my love for you provides, to efface or change that cherished memory. The profound faith that your love justifies is my greatest consolation and is the fountain-head of all my ambitions. When I am with you I am at my peak, have the broadest perspective. Apart from you I become mired in the morass that is the army way of life. Ambition is dulled, aggressiveness is lost, my ability to make decisions becomes perceptibly lessened. But as much as these powers are weakened, so much does my love for you become strengthened. Until, as now, all my being becomes focused entirely on you, my sole ambition becomes you and your love, and the promise of happiness together when we can again weld our lives into one becomes the shining beacon that guides me through the slough of separation which must lie between us until the war is ended. Always the miracle of your love will keep my head high and my spirit unbent.

I had an uneventful trip back to camp. The train was not crowded and I had a good seat. I started Monday morning with my rigging class but had to quit at 3:30 p.m. to clean up and go on guard duty. Every time I come back from furlough or a long pass I am put on some extra detail and this time it was guard duty. I feel very tired and sleepy now. It is impossible to get enough sleep. I have trouble getting back to sleep after walking post for two hours in the middle of the night, 1:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. During the day meals break into the middle of each rest period. I surely am glad that guard duty doesn't come often. The duty lists have been posted through Thursday and I am conspicuous by my absence. We pull guard again Sunday night and Monday and I will surely miss it so I may get home again this weekend. One of the men in my company, Tech Sgt. Southworth has been wanting to visit N.O. for a long time so I have invited him to come down with me this weekend so please fix the bed on the porch for him Sat. night unless you hear differently from me later. Goodnight sweetheart, I love you.

Hews

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

July 14, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

Happy birthday and many many happy returns. I surely do hope that we will be together for all the rest of them. I thought of you constantly all day yesterday, I surely did wish for an opportunity to call you on the telephone but as luck would have it I didn't even get a chance to write to you, and there by hangs a tale. During supper yesterday the first sergeant announced that no one could leave the vicinity of the dining tent until after the c.o. had spoken to us at a company meeting. This was a rather unusual proceeding and it aroused much comment but I think that no one was prepared for what happened. Lt. Reed started his speech very dramatically by calling for attention then surveying the company for at least a minute with one of those 'steely', 'dagger' looks before he said another word. Then he said in an ominous sort of voice, "I hope you are not doing what I'm doing now -----I'm looking for a thief". Well that kind of floored us for a minute. Then he went on to give us his own personal and very vitriolic opinion of said thief before he got down to the point of the meeting. (He didn't elucidate then but I found out later that \$285.00 had been taken from the wallet of a master sergeant while he slept. The wallet was in his pillow slip under his head.) The meeting was called so that the officers could search every man in order to recover the money before the thief could dispose of it. The search was very thorough but the money was not found. Next they decided to search every tent so we were instructed to go to our tents and sit on our bunks until our things had been searched. We were not allowed to touch any of our things. The search was very thorough and, consequently, very slow. It was 12:45 a.m. when the officer came in to search my things. I had plenty of time to write while I was waiting for him but we had specifically been told not to do any writing, I don't know why. When he came in he told me to spread my shelter half on the ground while he searched my bed. Then I had to get back on the bare bed while he searched through my barracks bags. He took out each article, looked it over then threw it on top of the pile in the middle of the shelter half. Next came the clothes I had hanging on coat hangers then my books, etc., etc. It was very thorough and very futile. When he finished all my possessions were jumbled up in one big pile on the shelter half. I had to put everything back in its proper place and make my bed before I could go to sleep. I got to bed at 2:00 a.m. In spite of all this searching the money was not found and the c.o. announced Friday morning that no one was under suspicion. The army certainly does things the hard way. The ap., who is very g.i., ordered the search in a fit of anger. A little foresight would have told him that such a search could have little chance of success since he had no way of positively identifying the money. As it was they found at least seven men in the company who were carrying \$300.00 or more. None of them had proof as to where the money came from but all of them had stories good enough to satisfy the c.o. Even if he had suspected one of them he couldn't identify the stolen money since it wasn't marked and he didn't have the serial numbers. But what a mess he made of the camp while he was looking for it. This letter has had many interruptions and has been in snatches. I was stopped several times in the middle of a sentence and once in the middle of a word. I am writing now at one o'clock Saturday afternoon. My cable splicing school is finished now and I have gone back to line duties. Thursday I was on detail at the regimental supply office. Friday I dug ditches all day with pick and shovel. Today I am on guard duty in the main camp. An outfit was moved out Friday and we are guarding their empty barracks in order to prevent anyone from removing any of the movable property they left behind. Now it is Sunday morning. This is a regular serial letter. It was very pleasant darling to talk to you on the phone last night. I'm sorry that I disturbed your sleep but I wasn't able to get the call through any earlier. I especially missed being with you on your birthday. No one has more reason to celebrate your birthday than I. Your birth was the most important thing that ever happened to me. For you have showered me with your affection and kindness. You have shared, sympathetically and cheerfully, many tribulations and troublous times that were brought on us solely by my own ineptitude and ignorance. You have endured my periods of despondency and brooding silence with great fortitude and understanding. Your unflagging patience with all my shortcomings has been a source of wonder to me and an unfailing beacon to set my straying steps on the path toward happiness and a full life. You have never failed me as a source of inspiration by your kind suggestions and fine example. The more so now that I have had to leave you. The many tasks you set for yourself and the magnificent results you are obtaining make my own poor efforts seem mean and little indeed. You have employed your time always in ways that are most beneficial to yourself to me and to the children. Your fine record of work as a draftsman, your cooking sewing and housekeeping, your music and love of fine literature have inspired me to try to match your diligence, have guided me culturally, and have set an inspiring stage of environment for me and for the children. In time of sickness your cheerful ministrations and your thoughtful attentions have turned pain into pleasure. You are an ideal wife and a model mother. In a word you have given me your love, completely and irrevocably. Such a love as leaves me breathless and humble, a love that is incomprehensible to me in the face of my own shortcomings. I try to return that love. I will spend my life trying to deserve it. I love you with all the love that I am capable of. I have the greatest admiration and respect for you. With God's help I will be worthy of the love you so lavishly bestow on me. Your love is enshrined in my heart where it is a constant bulwark against all temptations. Small wonder then that I feel so grateful for your birthday. It is by that day that I have received these many undeserved blessings.

Hews

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

July 18, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I hope that the heat has not been as bad in New Orleans as it has been here lately. We have been sizzling and stewing in our juices every day. The temperature goes above 100 every afternoon. So far the nights have been fairly comfortable after about 10:00 p.m. but they are getting hotter. The really hot nights that I know we are due for the next month are the only part of the summer heat that I really dread. I don't mind being hot during the day but it is impossible to sleep well on hot nights. I hope the fans at the office are able to give you some relief from the heat. I know how exasperating it can be to work on tracing paper with the perspiration dripping from face and arms. I think you should require your next employer to have air conditioned offices.

Honey I think that I am going to be able to come home again next week end after all. You know I told you that we were to pull guard duty again next Saturday night and Sunday which would prevent me from coming home. Well this evening a new listing was published by the regimental headquarters which puts C company on duty Wednesday night and Thursday and lets us off next weekend. The deal is a little rough on C company because we just came off of guard Monday evening. But everyone is so glad to have the weekend off that there are no complaints.

What do you think of the rumors about Standard moving mother and dad to Baton Rouge or Tulsa? It would be kind of nice to have them at Baton Rouge wouldn't it? I hope they don't go to Tulsa. Dad seems to think it more likely that e will be sent to Baton Rouge if they do make the move.

If I am able to get away this weekend I want to bring Sgt. Southworth with me: He is a well-mannered, intelligent fellow who I think you will like. He likes children very much and I think he will enjoy ours. I believe he will be almost as impressed by my family as I am. I am especially sure that he will be fond of my darling wife. She is irresistible.

I must stop now and go to see some more training films. Good night darling, I love you.

Hews

July 19, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I haven't time to write much today. I have just finished a day of k.p. and I am getting ready to go see some more training films. K.p. wasn't such a long day today. We had supper at 4:00 o'clock for most of the company so we were able to get a lot of work done early. Twenty men came in at 5:30 for supper and by the time they came we had everything cleaned up except the serving pots and pans. We were finished by 6:45.

Our regiment has drawn a rather dirty detail in Camp Claiborne. The M.P.s attached to the 84th Infantry Division have been doing all the guard work in the camp. But they have been relieved of duty at the prisoner stockade for American soldiers and our regiment has been ordered to provide the guards. Every time a company draws regimental guard they also have to provide the guards for the stockade. In addition to the guards at the stockade itself we have to furnish 30 guards to take prisoners out of the stockade on work details. This is the worst detail of all since one guard is often sent out with four or five prisoners for whom he is responsible. If a prisoner escapes the guard is court martialled and may be imprisoned himself for being derelict in his duty. Unfortunately I have been assigned to this duty for tomorrow from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. I hate the thought of standing over a group of other soldiers with a loaded rifle and orders to shoot if any of them tries to escape. The men who are sent outside of the stockade are minor offenders, mostly awols, so I don't expect to have any trouble with them but the whole idea is very repugnant to me. I must stop now and go the show. Goodnight sweetheart, I love you.

Hews

8/6/1944 Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

Dear Cile: I was so glad to hear you had postponed the tonsil operations for the present. I had been thinking about it all week and wondered how you would manage it while you were sick. There will be time for it later when things are more favorable. Your mumps would string along instead of having both sides at once and be done with it. Has Annette taken it yet, surely don't see how she can escape it, do you.

I guess Bobby is on foreign soil by now or at least near it. He called Thursday night and from all I could piece together he was to be gone in a few hours. I expect he left early yesterday. He had a plane and was to ferry it across.

We picked another watermelon today and it was white all the way through. As a melon grower Dad is a better tomato grower. Ha! He had planned to send a melon to the children but guess he wont now. You know he had his chrysanthemums planted back of the garage and the melon plants were all around them. After he pulled up the tomato plants he decided to transplant the mums into the tomato beds. It was a chance to take but by taking big balls of earth around each plant and watering them well he has been successful. The plants are now growing and we have visions of a beautiful Fall flower garden.

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

I have been viewing with interest a display of Fall childrens clothes on display in the Washington jouree (sp). The display is from the Jack & Jill childrens shop out on Centenary. If I ever get away from the office long enough I am going out to see what I can find.

The route we followed on our trip to N.O. was much more interesting than the regular Shreveport N.O. highway. The roads are good and there seems so much more natural beauty with the live oaks and moss – cane fields etc.. Some of the homes that back up to the bayous look like dream places. I believe if I had plenty of money and could plan a life of retirement that would be my choice as a home site.

We went to see the picture of Mark Twain and enjoyed it so much. Try to see it you will like it.

Things are quiet today and I am taking a rest. Sundays are my salvation because I spend the day resting and then find myself ready for the weeks work.

Hope you are feeling better by now.

All my love,

Mom

8/6/1944, Shreveport, LA, Hews McCann, Sr. (Papa)

Dear Cile:

Well I know you are surprised to hear from Papa but I thought I would just flabbergast you and send you a few lines even if it is a poor letter, it was always hard for me to write as I feel like I do such a poor job of it, my mother wrote such good letters but I believe my brother Jim inherited all of her talent because he writes such good newsy letters it is always a pleasure to hear from him.

I suppose Hews Jr. has told you I am singing at St. Marks now, I am thoroughly enjoying my singing now, perhaps it is because I was brought up in the Episcopal Church that I like it so well, it is a great load off my mind not to have the responsibility of the music, I never want to direct a choir again there is too much worry to it to suit me especially with a small volunteer choir. We have evening service at 7:30 which is a short service mostly hymn singing for the men in the service.

Well we think Bobby is in England by now, don't you know he got a thrill out of piloting a B-24 across the ocean, wont he have lots to tell us when he gets back home, we must all pray that Hews Jr. and Bobby both get back home safely, sure hope the war ends pretty soon now.

How is your Mumps now, why couldn't you have them like I did when you were little I am really surprised at you, I know it must have gone pretty hard with Sam as it is much harder on a grown up person.

How is your mother by now, is she still honey-mooning I am so glad she has found some one that loves her and give her some happiness as she truly deserves it after raising such a large and (hard to manage) bunch of children, and she has given them all good educations which serve them in good stead to meet the trials and tribulations of this life.

Well Cile I hope you are well by now and back on the job with Consolidated, tell Dorothy, Cile and Annette Pappa wants them to be good little girls.

Love,

Dad

August 16, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

This has been a bad week for letter writing. I haven't been able to get started. I was free Monday night after a company meeting that lasted until 7:30 p.m. but I was so tired and sleepy that I had to go to bed. I was asleep almost as soon as my head touched the pillow. I worked all day Monday and Tuesday too packing the tools and equipment in the company tool trailers. Every piece had to be cleaned with gasoline then coated with cosmoline and wrapped in a sticky waterproof linen. Then the things were packed in wooden crates which had been lined with heavy waterproof paper. The paper was sealed with hot tar. I think that if that stuff was kept in storage for a hundred years it would still be in perfect shape. It certainly is thoroughly packed. Last night we were put out on special guard duty until midnight. It's a good thing I caught up on my sleep Monday night. A Negro soldier raped a white woman near Claiborne Monday morning. We guarded the roads all around the camp while posses combed the woods. They haven't found him so far. There has been a lot of bad feeling against the Negro soldiers over the incident. Tonight I went into camp with the Southworths and saw a picture show. We had a nice time together. Dick is expecting to be moved out real soon now. The 84th Division has been made airborne and Dick says that they have finished their training and are getting ready to move now. He and Arnold are planning to visit us this weekend. Dick will probably leave at noon Sat. and hitch-hike down so he can get there in time to do some shopping before the stores close. He will meet us at the station and we will come out to the house together. They want to go crabbing Sunday. I guess that you are back on the job by now. I hope that you are feeling well and do not feel tired from your work. I expect that it will take you a few days to become readjusted to the office routine. I surely do hope that you have been able to

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

get the servant situation straightened out by now. I know it will be a load on your mind until you find a new girl and get her broken in. Good luck darling! Its eleven o'clock now and the lights will go out any minute so I must quit and get to bed. Goodnight sweetheart, I love you loads and loads (big loads).

Hews

August 19, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

It's Saturday morning but I still don't know whether I'll be able to come home tonight or not – I won't know until late this afternoon. I'm hoping for the best but there is a strong chance that we will be kept in this weekend. There has been no more active trouble with the Negroes since Wednesday night when twenty seven of them were arrested. One white lieutenant and two Negro soldiers were injured that night. There is still a lot of resentment among the Negroes though and we are still guarding our camp and the gates of the main camp. I have been on guard at one of the gates all night and will be on duty all day today. We stop all vehicles and search them for weapons and ammunition. We also search all the Negro soldiers unless they are accompanied by white officers who are willing to vouch for them. We have plenty of ammunition and are ordered to fire at any vehicle that fails to stop. I surely will be glad when this business quiets down. I believe that the crisis is past now though and that there will be no serious trouble.

I hope I can get home tonight darling. You have planned such a nice weekend for us that I would especially hate to miss it. Arnie is anxious to come too. He is holding a pessimistic attitude about our passes though in hopes that will have a favorable influence on the perversity of fate. I want to come so bad and so wholeheartedly that I can't dissemble even to myself. Darling, you and mother hold out a hope for me that I had long ago dismissed as impossible by planning to help me get a degree. I guess you know me well enough to realize how much that would mean to me. Since I left school I have constantly kept education before me as the first objective to achieve before I could hope to do anything big. I have learned a great deal at work and by such self-instruction as I could manage but I realize that it is impossible for me to achieve alone the wide scope of learning that I could get at the university. It would undeniably be a remunerative asset for me to have a degree too. It is a sort of pedigree in the world of professional business and I have certainly found out how difficult it is to enter a profession without that pedigree. I would work very hard and would be willing to sacrifice much for a chance to finish my college work. I realize now how much it could mean to me. But I hesitate to ask you to make the sacrifices that would be necessary. If I went back to college I would want to continue in architecture. It would take a long time to finish – at least three years, perhaps four. I think though that I could do it in three years. In order to get the most out of the courses I would want to put the most time possible into them. That would mean many nights spent in the drawing room or in the library, afternoons in the field sketching. I would probably alternate between incommunicative spells when I would wander around for days in a daze, periods of elation when I would talk your arm off about studies in which you had no interest, or periods of depression when my progress didn't suit me. When I would be at home I would be sure to have my nose buried in some book and I would probably neglect you shamefully. I am sure that I would often be irritable if you or the children interrupted my work. Indeed I expect that you would have a pretty miserable three or more years of it with no guarantee of justification for it at the end. You would have to work to make it financially possible and I expect that you would often be tired yourself and think me ungrateful for your efforts when I paid you too little attention in my absorption. I would think that your irritation was justified only if I failed to apply myself diligently or if I failed to do good work. I would probably lose my muscles and gain a paunch and I would surely have to start wearing glasses again for I would have little interest in exercise other than mental exercise. I expect that would be a bone of contention between us. There would be a thousand and one hardships and neglects for you to endure and you would often wonder if it was worthwhile. You might even think that I was growing away from you and losing my love for you. But that could never be so. I could only love you more for going through so much with and for me. But I would often forget to show it I'm afraid. Indeed I expect that I would often seem more married to the college than to you. There is much to consider before you decide to take this step. You would be letting yourself in for many trials and hardships and disappointments. I would be a changed man in many respects if I returned to school and most of the changes would be added hardships for you. You must consider carefully before you decide to go into it. Completion of college and the degree that I would possess would open wider vistas of achievement and happiness than are possible now but they would be interminable slow coming. There would be many days of dry bread and water before the cake and wine were served. You must count the cost carefully before you decide for I would be loathe to quit if I got started. It would be easier not to start than to start and have to quit. I have tried to show you the worst side in this letter and much of the time I am sure it would be at least as bad as I have written here. But I must be honest with you. I want you to know what you would be letting yourself in for. I will not say any more to you about this. There is plenty of time for you to think it over and discuss it with mother. Don't say any more about it until you are sure. If you decide it is impractical just don't say anything more about it ever. One thing more. You must realize that all our savings would probably go before I finished and we would have to save again later for the children's education. I love you very dearly sweetheart.

Hews

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

8/20/1944, Shreveport, LA, Hews McCann, Sr. (Papa)

Dear Cile:

Sure glad to get your last letter stating that you and all children are well again and you are back on the job again, sure hope you get that Air Conditioning as it really helps, so many people say you burn up when you get outside, but think how delightful it is while you are working. I believe you can do your work better and faster as you feel so refreshed all of the time. fans are a nuisance as they blow the papers off of your desk so bad, I know you will enjoy it.

I was slated to sing a solo at St. Marks this morning but it was cancelled due to the fact that the Publisher of the solo was banned from broadcasting, so Dad did not get a chance to show off, better luck next time. We were so happy to hear from Bobby, we heard so quickly there was a lapse of just one week between his letters, I think that was fine don't you.

Mother is holding up better than I thought we would when Bobby went across, I suppose working helps her as it keeps her mind occupied, she is really doing a fine piece of work at the Ration Board, she knows the rules and regulations and she is so kind and thoughtful with everyone and she is always making good suggestions, they really hold her in high esteem, I go by every morning at about 9:30 a.m. and we go to the Youree grill to get a cup of coffee, this peps her a bit so all in all she is holding up real well.

I suppose Hews Jr. will be leaving pretty soon now I know the boys must be chafing at the bit to get going and do something, just think he has been 10 mos. At Claiborne, I believe the out door life has been good for him.

Tell the children AKARAMBO NI NESH NI LO NA VE NA PO for me, tell them Papa and Granny sure want to see them.

Love,
Dad

August 25, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

Life has become very dull and boring around here. For the first time we have actually run out of something to do. All our tools and equipment except the barest essentials have been packed. We can't pack the rest until the last minute before we leave. We have finished our jobs in camp and we have no training schedule. So there is practically nothing left to do. They can't even invent much for us to do because we have no tools to work with. Yesterday we did 'bunk fatigue' all morning. Is the first day I can remember in the army except Sundays when we had the entire morning to ourselves. In the afternoon we played baseball for an hour after lunch then went back to our tents for the rest of the day. Today I was sent to the supply room for the day. We stacked a few boxes and straightened the supply room up – about an hours work – and spent the rest of the day just sitting around talking. We were dismissed for the day at 2:45 this afternoon. It isn't at all nice to be here with nothing to do. I would much rather be so busy that I had no time to get so lonesome for you. I'll be home again tomorrow night though I'm sure. I don't appear on the detail lists for the weekend and I have already applied for a pass. I'm sure I'll get it. Arnie is coming with me again. He is very anxious to see Pat again and the Reillys and all, he says, but I am sure it is mostly Pat. I don't think it will be necessary for us to go with him but it might be fun to see what goes on so we will go if you want to. I don't know whether Dick will come too or not. I expect he will come out to see Arnie tonight and he can find out. I'm going into camp tonight to see one of the U.S.O. Camp Shows. They are usually very good vaudeville. I have seen several of them and have thoroughly enjoyed every one I saw. I was glad to hear that Michael had had such a good object lesson from Jimmy. I hope he doesn't forget it and I don't think he will. Perhaps now he will become an ally of the children. He would make a better ally than enemy. I must dress for retreat now. Goodbye now sweetheart, I love you.

Hews

8/27/1944 , Shreveport, LA, Hews McCann Sr. (Papa)

Dear Cile:

Mother enjoyed talking to you and the children so much on long distance, when she doesn't hear from Hews Jr. as often as she thinks she should she gets ants in her pants and starts wondering if he has been transferred, from his letter I would not be surprised if he was'nt getting ready to go across, I know the boys in his company must be getting anxious to get in action and feel like with all of their hard training it should be put to use, if Hews does go across I know he will make a good soldier and will always do his duty to his God, Country and family, I never feel uneasy about Hews, he is entirely different from Bobby, I suppose part of it is due to Bobby being single, he does not have an Anchor as yet to tie himself to, of course he has his parents but they are not like a man's wife and children, it takes something substantial like that to settle a man down, sure hope Bobby finds some good girl after the war and really settles down, he has been having a good time long enough.

We are still very busy at the office, we are taking on so many new connections from Miss. I am very glad as that is where your mother has her plantation, boy would'nt it be a break if they found oil on her place, it sure would be a break for you and Hews, I believe Miss. Will be the next big oil producing state.

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

I just about finished planting my fall garden yesterday, we had a good rain last night so my prospects look favorable, I think I will have a few chrysanthemums this fall, they are about the last thing to bloom in the fall.

How are the children, well I hope, sure want to see them, tell them all hello for Papa.

Love

Dad

9/3/1944 , Shreveport, LA, Albert Hews McCann Sr. (Papa)

Dear Cecile: Dad beat me , he has finished writing all of his letters. I am so slow and it seems I never have anything to write.

We have heard from Bobby again. His letter was written Aug. 22nd and he said he had been there at his permanent base just six days and had three missions to his credit. It surprised me because I did not expect him to actually start missions until he had received some training in that area. They don't believe in wasting time do they?

Has Hews moved? We have not heard since I talked to you Friday a week ago. I am so anxious to know where he is going. Sort of hope he can go where he can see things of interest. It would be nice if he could go where Bobby is. Italy has so much that Hews is interested in, in the way of art and architecture.

If you hear we have been run out of the neighborhood don't be surprised. We are having so much fun singing. Last night Mrs. Goodwin, Florence and the Hardens came over and we dug out some old favorites. We even sang K.K.K.Katie – Ha.

Is there anything I can do towards getting the children ready for school? How are they fixed for clothes – do they need rain coats or anything of the sort. Do you have stocking trouble? I guess my knees are too fat, anyway I am always busting out there.

We have been having the nicest rains the past week and everything is growing fast again, especially the grass.

I have been hitting it in high with 32 volunteer ladies each day working on the A books. We are up to our planned schedule of 1600 books ready for mailing each day. It will take the next two weeks to finish.

The war news is still looking good. Hope we have peace soon now.

Everything is as usual here – everyone well and busy.

Love,

Mom

September?, 1944, Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

Dear Cecile: We were so glad to hear from you and know everything is alright there. By the way you and your maids names are a coincidence aren't they? Do you like this one?

How do you like the news today? I surely hope they can soon end this war and hope it is not used to further political aspirations.

What do you hear from your mother? Is she still in Brazil?

Marie Theresa called today. She is staying with the Morgans on Fairview again so expect we will see her often. Last winter she had to prepare her own meals and was not so pleased and this year with Mrs. Morgan she gets her meals which suits her much better. She had a wonderful time in Mexico this summer.

You should see the spider lilies. They are making a wonderful display.

I made my first appearance in St. Marks choir this morning. I surely felt strange but everyone was most cordial and seemed glad to have me.

As it looks now we plan to visit you two weeks from yesterday and today. We thought we might make it in the car but have had to use it so much running to see about Florence that our coupons will not be sufficient. The train trip is much easier when time is limited.

I am wondering if Hews was on the troop train that went through here Wednesday. There was one on the I C track back of the old L & A Depot and a freight train backed into it. No one was hurt except the engineer who had a sprained ankle. The paper said the train was going north. I did not know about the wreck until next day or I would have tried to see if he was there.

Our last news of Bobby was written Sept. 2nd. He had completed eleven missions.

I have been so lazy this afternoon, sort of nodding as I write. There is nothing of interest or at least nothing comes to my mind.

Call us anytime you feel like it and reverse the charges. We are always so anxious to hear from you. Keep me posted about Hews too because he doesn't get many letters written to us.

Love to all

Mom

9/3/1944, Shereveport, LA, Hews McCann Sr. (Papa)

Dear Cile:

Well what is the latest from Hews, Jr. as we have not heard from him for some time we naturally jump to the conclusion that he has broken camp and moved, I know you will hate to see him move but the boys must be chafing at the bits to get going and do something, anything to get away from Claiborne and feel like they are doing something tangible to win the war, and is'nt the news good now, is the end just around the corner, don't we hope so, Germany just cant last much longer that is sure.

We had a nice Communion service at St. Marks this morning, our Rector Dr. Walters was back from his vacation spent in Arkansas, he surely is splendid, a young man, full of enthusiasm, a good speaker, preached a short sermon but says a whole lot in a few words, the congregation likes him so much, he also has an assistant I believe you call him a Curate, so the church must be well fixed financially to engage two men, the church was well filled this morning. We have been getting wonderful rains this past week which has been very good for my fall garden, my chrysanthemums look good too, we really needed this rain.

I am real busy at the office now, I suppose you are too, the Standard. is buying so much oil, there is a ready market for all of the oil they can refine, I have a holiday tomorrow but mother has to work, I will probably go down and help her out part of the day as she has so much work getting the new gasoline ration books out, something like 16,000 so that means lots of hard work.

Sure hope you and the children are all well, write and tell us all the news.

Love,
Dad

September 4, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I was awfully disappointed yesterday morning. I went into camp to telephone you at 9:30 a.m. The local operator told me that there would be a one to two hour delay but I told her that I still wanted to place the call so she connected me with the long distance operator. Long distance put the call right through for me while I held the phone but no one answered at home. I surely was sorry that you were out. I was very anxious to talk to you. I'm pretty sure that I will be able to get home again next weekend but I'm afraid that it will be the last time. A notice has been posted on our bulletin board that no passes will be issued after next Monday. The indications are that we will move about the fifteenth which is a week from next Saturday. Honey lets have Sunday all to ourselves. The luck on passes has run out and it will probably be a long time before we can be together again. Let's make Sunday a day to remember and to build dreams on.

I've been studying my French like a good boy. So far I've finished five lessons in the conversation grammar. I like the way the subject is presented very much. The other book is pure grammar and is written in French for advanced students. I'll have to accumulate a vocabulary before I can use it much. I refer to it some already though to get the theory of what is only given practically in the conversation grammar. I'm enjoying it a lot and wondering how Mr. Silin made it seem so hard. Goodnight sweetheart, I love you very much.

Hews

September 6, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I started to write you last night just after supper when Arnold came up and invited me to go into camp with him to tell Dick goodbye. We weren't sure that we would find him there because he had told Arnold Sunday that he might leave Tuesday. On our way to his company area we passed a long troop train which was being loaded with men from the 84th Division and we felt sure that we had missed him. So we were pleasantly relieved when we got to his area and found that it was still occupied. The company was in Coventry though with a heavy cordon of armed guards around the area. Of course we couldn't go into the area but we were able to get someone to find Dick for us. Dick finally came to the guard line and we were able to talk to him for about fifteen minutes. There was a very bad rain storm approaching and we had a long way to walk to find shelter from it so we had to hurry. Dick's outfit was scheduled to load onto the troop train this afternoon at three thirty. Their duffle bags were already on the train and they had their packs rolled I should say. They were supposed to sleep outdoors last night because their barracks had been scrubbed and nailed shut. There was such a bad rain storm tho that I'm sure they must have opened the barracks and slept inside. It's almost time to go back to work after lunch now so I must

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close. Dick didn't know where they were going but thought it would be near New York. I got your letter enclosing the \$10.00. Thanks, I hope I can use it to get home this weekend. Goodbye Sweetheart. I love you,

Hews

September 7, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I am really glad that you decided to continue with your Sunday School class next year. I know that it is a big load to add to your multitude of responsibilities and I realize that it is very frustrating to be forced to be irregular in attendance. But I feel sure that the satisfaction you got from your church work last year far exceeded all the attendant bad features. It gives you a good feeling, I know, to have them want you again this year so badly. Dean Nes takes a lot of pride in the Sunday school and feels that it is one of the most important phases of his work. Naturally he wants his instructors to be the most intelligent and competent persons available so it is flattering for him to want you back so badly. You know as well as I that if your work had been unsatisfactory he would be quite able to replace you. This work makes you so much a part of the church that it is an enviable opportunity for you to become educated yourself to the traditions and rituals which are generally strange to both of us. You must learn well so you can teach me. There is much that is strange to me that I would like to learn about those traditions and rituals. It's late now and I must go to bed. Goodnight darling. I love you very much,

Hews

September 4, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I had a seat on the train coming back to camp but I didn't get a bit of sleep. I didn't think I was upset so much but I guess I was pretty exhausted emotionally. Sunday was a deeply stirring day and my mind was in a whirl by the time I got on the train. I couldn't think yet I couldn't stop thinking. I could relax my muscles but not my mind. I tried all the tricks I knew but nothing worked. By the time I went on guard duty Monday evening I was in a sad state. I was so tired by then I could hardly keep awake but then I had to stay awake. It was a good thing that I was on guard duty today though. I finally managed to piece together a good night's sleep between duty hitches. While I was thus pleasantly engaged the rest of the regiment was in a dither of activity getting ready to move from bivouac into Camp Claiborne. Tents were being taken down and loaded onto trucks. Beds were being folded and stacked by the mattresses. Clothes etc. were being packed in barracks bags and everything burnable was being burned. I missed all the work. Someone else packed and carried my bags and bed and bedding while I rested. It was wonderful. I never expected to get such deluxe service in the army. We moved into the nicest part of camp near the main gate where we even have gas heat. No more coal. It's too nice to last. We probably won't be here a week. I talked to mother and dad on the phone tonight. It was nice to talk to them again. It's late now and I still need sleep so I'd better get to bed. Goodnight sweetheart, I love you very much.

Hews

September 13, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

We policed up the area all day today. The old bivouac area that is. We moved pretty thoroughly yesterday but there were some things we couldn't finish until today. For instance the warehouses wouldn't accept the tents, beds, and mattresses until today. We took down the last three tents that had been left up to shelter the cots and mattresses last night and sorted out the tents with the good ones in one pile and those needing repair in another pile. The stack of good tents was very small. After we had finished taking things to the warehouses we had to finish burning everything that was left that would burn. All the trash that couldn't be burned was hauled to the dump. Then we buried the fires and called it quits. There is hardly a trace left of our occupancy except for the ruts made by the trucks and the fresh mounds of earth with little signs reading "Latrine Closed, date, 361st Engr. Regmt."

Moving into the main camp is, for us, just like going to the railroad station. We have been packing things for more than a month out in the woods. Now we are waiting for our train. We still have a little last minute packing to do but it doesn't amount to much. Our biggest problem right now is determining what to throw away because there just isn't enough room in the one bag we are allowed to take everything we would like to take. By the time we get all our clothes and two blankets in that bag there is practically no room left for incidentals and there seem to be an awful lot of incidentals. We have been issued a lot of new clothes in the last couple of weeks and we have to turn in our worn out clothes tomorrow morning. I haven't begun to get my things sorted out yet so I think I'd better get started at it. Since supper I have cleaned my rifle for an inspection tomorrow morning, got a haircut, and wrote this letter. I also would like to get a little sleep so goodnight darling. I love you,

Hews

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September 14, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I did a foolish thing while I was packing my duffle bag last night. I packed my writing kit and fountain pen almost at the bottom of the bag. So I had to borrow a pen from one of my hut mates to write to you. The one I borrowed is no bargain either. I guess I'll have to dig into my bag and get my writing kit out again. I can't imagine now why I packed it away at all. I certainly wasn't thinking very far ahead. This has been a very uninspiring day. This morning we turned in all our old clothes. We turned in two sets of Kackies and kept one clean set to wear when we get off the train at our destination. We are going to wear fatigues on the train though. About fifteen minutes after I turned in my clothes they remembered that we were supposed to wear Kackies at the P.X. and at the moving pictures. We couldn't wear the suit we kept out because we had to keep it clean and there will be no more laundry service for us. So they decided to return one suit to us. Well about half the company had turned theirs in and they were all piled in the middle of the floor of the supply room in one grand mess. They couldn't be re-issued until they had been sorted out in some sort of order. So I was put to work with three other men folding pants and shirts and sorting them alphabetically according to the initial and serial number stamped in each piece. That kept me boredly occupied until noon. After lunch I was put to work with a gang of eight men greasing field ranges and G.I. cans with heavy axle grease. What a messy job that was. We finished it in about two hours though and we are off now for the afternoon I hope. I have to sew a pair of stripes on a fatigue jacket then I must get into that damned duffle bag again and see if I can figure out a way to pack more into it than it can possibly hold. It's quite a problem. I had it pretty well figured out until they decided to let us put two heavy blankets in addition to all the other things. So excuse me for a while now while I go quietly batty. I love you very much.

Hews

September 16, 1944, Camp Claiborne, LA, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

My pen is packed up again. On purpose though this time. We had to pack everything today just as we intended to take on the train. I transferred my writing kit from my duffle bag, which will travel in a baggage car, to my pack which will stay with me. I could have kept my pen out of course but I was afraid that I might lose it in the bustle of leaving. We are to load our duffle bags and blanket rolls on the train tomorrow afternoon then we will return to the company area and have a grand final cleaning up. Each platoon has been assigned one of the company buildings to clean. One platoon has the mess hall another the supply room and the other the day room and latrine. My platoon drew the supply room which was a break. It would be the easiest place to clean. Of course we will also have to clean our huts thoroughly. All in all I expect it will be a very busy Sunday for us. We will sleep in the huts Sunday night but I expect that we will be leaving sometime Monday. We will eat outside the mess hall Monday from paper plates so as not to get the dining room dirty. I have been assigned to seat #14 in car #6 of train #3. We had a dry run of the loading today with wooden stakes along the side of the street to simulate the railroad cars. The army dry runs everything for no very good apparent reason. Any good reason must be very remotely buried in the hierarchy of the army's nobility. (Colonels and higher). We should have a pretty good trip. We are supposed to have regular Pullman sleepers and the newest type of kitchen car. We will sleep two men in a lower berth and one in the upper berth. We may be a little crowded at night but we will have plenty of room in the daytime. It will certainly be much better than the cattle car type of troop train with bunks built in box cars. In a way I will be glad to leave. If we must go I would like to go on and get this waiting over. For eight months now we have been expecting to leave and it has been very discouraging and frustrating to be left of in the corner of camp Claiborne like a cast off shoe. Goodnight darling I love you,

Hews

9/17/1944, Shreveport, LA, Hews McCann Sr. (Papa)

Well where is our wandering boy today, I hope if he has gone across it will be the Atlantic route as the South Pacific does not appeal to me on account of so many tropical diseases.

Mother went to St. Marks with me this morning and I think she enjoyed it, she was a little uneasy that she would do the wrong thing but she got along like a veteran Episcopalian, she got a runner in her stocking from kneeling so much so guess she will have to wear socks, we had a male quartet for a special number and it went very well, we had about twenty two in the Choir that seems large to me after directing the small Kingshighway Choir.

Florence is staying with Clara for the present, she is really our problem child, Dr. Durham wanted her to stay in the hospital for several months for treatment, she stood it for one week and left, they gave her about every test on the books and found several things wrong, an enlarged heart, Goiter, Anemia and several other things, she is very downcast and sorry for herself, she does not want to go to another doctor, Clara does not have room for her in her home for any length of time and she could not very well live with us as Mother is working so we are at loss to know what to do. I am taking my last two weeks vacation starting Monday, I have a service at B'Nai Zion and ten days later sing all day on Yom Kippur so my name is

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McCansky now. Hope we will be able to run down there before my vacation is over as we want to see you and the children, tell them hello for Papa.

Love
Dad

September 21, 1944, Somewhere Near the East Coast, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart

We finished a long dull trip today when we arrived at our new camp in the vicinity of the east coast, cant tell you where I am now and no one knows how long we will be here but I don't think it will be very long. I hope to be able to visit (name blocked out) before we move on. We will be restricted for a while though before there will be any possibility of getting a pass. I won't be able to get to a telephone or a telegraph office until after our restriction is lifted so I expect you will get this letter before I can get in touch with you any other way. The only way that you will be able to get in touch with me from now on will be by mail through the A.P.O. You may be able to send me telegraph messages to a code address. If there is such a code address I will let you know it as soon as possible. Letter writing is going to be quite a problem from now on because there are so many things that we are not allowed to write about anymore. It's late and I'm tired so I'd better go to bed. Goodnight darling, I love you.

Hews

September 22, 1944, Somewhere Near the East Coast, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

We are beginning to settle down a little in our new camp now. We are restricted to such a small portion of the camp that it didn't take long for us to become oriented. The strangeness of the new surroundings is quite relieved because there are no new faces for us to become familiar with. That is a big help. The setting of our new camp is lovely. We are surrounded by low, rolling, tree covered mountains. Their green is fading in spots now and the first touches of autumn color relieve and emphasize the deep green of the tree carpet. The slowly moving shadows of clouds floating overhead make kaleidoscopic patters on the sides of the mountains. The nights are very cool and we have to wear coats for the early morning formations. But the air is crisp and invigorating and I don't mind the cold (so far). It soon warms up though and we are glad to shed the coats. The afternoons are very warm. We made a long march this afternoon and everyone was perspiring freely before we had walked many blocks. It's late now so I must go to bed. Goodnight darling, I love you.

Hews

9/24/1944, Shreveport, LA, Hews McCann Sr. (Papa)

Dear Hews:

Well we are all wondering if you are still in this country or set sail for the battle front, my what you and Bobby will see and hear before this war is all over, you will have experiences that would have never been possible had there been no war, you would probably have lived out your lives in pretty much the same way as your parents, close to home, with the exception of several Shrine trips you might say my whole life has been spent in a radius of 100 miles of Shreveport ever since. Your education will be very much broadened from having seen so many countries and your contacts with so many different kinds of people, it is an education in itself.

We had the Bishop install the Rev. Mr. Walters as Rector of St. Marks this morning, I believe it is the first time I ever saw one installed, it was a nice service but very short, we were out at noon, there were no chants, only an Anthem which went very well, I had a solo part in it, the Choir is going very well, we have three basses, two tenors and plenty of sopranos and Altos, had about 30 voices this morning, I also played Trumpet in the 4 Square Bible class this morning at the City Hall, Mr. Larmoyeaux a violinist directs this orchestra, we played from 9:30 to 10 o'clock so I had plenty of time to get to St. Marks, I enjoyed it but I do not know yet whether I will continue as my time is pretty much taken up as it is. Mother and I will be able to get off from St. Marks for one Sunday. Monday starts the last week of my vacation.

Florence is still living with us, I do not think she has improved much, she really looks bad, I think she will go home in the morning and get her clothes ready for her trip to Denver, she is hoping "Polly" will be able to make the trip with her on the train, Clara does not think she is well enough to make the trip alone.

Florence stayed one week at the Sanitarium, Dr. Durham the nerve specialist thought it imperative that she stay two or three months in the sanitarium so she could take his treatments, she stood it for one week and then Clara took her out to her house for one week and then brought her over to our house last Friday, she is a real problem, unable to work, not satisfied to go back home, Clara does not have room for her and mother and I are both working so we could not look after her either, if she goes to Denver I do not see how Mabel can look after her as she is working too, and then there is the question of money, if some doctor treats her in Denver it will take lots of money. I know you will let us know just as soon as you can where you are because we will be terribly anxious about you until we know for sure where your destination will be.

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Love,
Dad

September 24, 1944, Somewhere Near the East Coast, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I made my first visit to New York last night. I didn't do much more than roam around the streets and try to orient myself. I walked for miles along Broadway and many cross streets between 30th St. and 58th St. The only place I stopped at for any time at all was the Stage Door Canteen where I spent about half an hour. I was a little disappointed in the appearance of the canteen. It is located in a dingy basement and is practically not decorated at all. The people there are very friendly though and do all they can to help the soldiers et al have a good time. The place was very crowded but there were plenty of hostesses to dance with or to sit with and talk. They serve free coffee, sandwiches, cake, and cigarettes. There is no color distinction at the canteen and they have several colored hostesses for the colored service men. The entertainment is rather spotty and disorganized. All the entertainers come in at odd free moments so the band changes several times in the course of the evening with juke box music in the long intermissions between bands. Actors and actresses pop in at odd moments, confer briefly back stage with the m.c. of the moment then appear for three to five minutes to tell a couple of jokes or sing a song. I saw Gertrude Bond and the English juvenile who played in the picture "Laddie", I don't remember his name. I wasn't able to see much wandering around at night. Broadway was terribly crowded in the theatre section but the cross streets were deserted. It was impossible to get a room in town so I wound up the night with a short stroll through Greenwich Village and returned to camp. Goodbye for now darling, I surely do wish you were here. I love you.

Hews

September 25, 1944, Somewhere Near the East Coast, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I've been a bad boy and I'm now in the process of having my hand severely spanked figuratively. I surely do wish that you were here to commiserate with me. Things are a little confused here still. So far we don't have a separate room for a company orderly room so a couple of packing case desks at one end of a barracks is being used as a makeshift office. Having all the company's paper work done on those packing cases leaves quite a confused welter of accumulated paper scattered over their tops at all times. When we leave camp on pass we are required to sign our names on a sheet of paper and give our destination. At our old camp we had a wooden stand outside the orderly room which held the mimeographed forms that we used there to sign out on. Here we have no convenient stand to hold the sign-out list, and no special form. When we left camp on our first passes Saturday night we signed out on a plain sheet of typewriter bond. The list was left loose with all the other papers on top of one of the packing case desks. Some of the companies tacked their lists on the bulletin board at the front of the barracks where the street lights would make task of signing in the middle of the night easy for their men. Of course no lights may be left on in the barracks after taps. The inertia of our orderly room provided no such convenience for the men of C Company, and still hasn't. My pass was good until seven thirty Sunday morning but as I told you a couple of letters ago I came back early. I arrived at the orderly room at 3:05 Sunday morning with one of the men in my barracks named McMillin. We went into the dark barracks where the orderly room is located to turn in our passes and sign in. Neither of us had any matches and my cigarette lighter wasn't working so we tried to locate the list by picking up pieces of paper at random and taking them to the front door where the street light provided enough illumination for us to identify them. We couldn't find the list. The 'charge of quarters' could have located the list for us but he was asleep and we didn't want to disturb him in the middle of the night – he has a tough job and gets very little rest. Finally we decided to leave our passes and go to bed expecting to be waked up for breakfast before seven thirty. Leaving our passes would show that we had returned to camp and we expected to be waked up in time to sign in before the passes expired anyhow. No one waked us for breakfast but at about seven thirty someone was sent over from the orderly room to get me to come sign in. I went right over and saw the C.O. and explained why I had not signed in when I turned in my pass. I asked him to give me the list so I could sign in then but instead of giving it to me he told me that it was all right and that he had taken care of it for me. Well I was very surprised at noon today when my name and McMillin's were called with a group of twenty men who were to receive company punishment for coming in late on pass or for failing to sign in on time. I talked with several of the men who had been turned in for not signing in on time and found that most of them had experienced about the same difficulties I had. They were all very bitter at being accused tried and convicted, in absentia and without recourse, of deliberately breaking a company ruling when they had all, in fact, been very conscientious about returning to camp early and had all gone into the orderly room to return their passes and with the intention of signing in. However the company commander considered our offence so severe and our example to the company so bad that he decided to punish us as a group by restricting us to the regimental area and by making us perform all fatigue details for an indefinite period, "until further notice from your company commander" as the first sergeant put it. I still can't see where I have committed any heinous offence but I accepted the punishment without protest. Several of the men did try to explain their cases to the C.O. but it did them no good at all. I was sure that it would avail nothing to talk to him so I didn't try it. Obviously the C.O. was not interested in hearing the

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extenuating circumstances of our cases or he would have talked to some of us before he made his decision. Since he had taken a definite stand he couldn't retract without losing face. I think anyhow that he considers it unmanly for us to protest or resent openly any of his decisions that are restrictive to us. So I have extra k.p. tomorrow and no telling what after that. It's been a relief to get it off my chest though. Good night sweetheart. I love you very much.

Hews

September 26, 1944, Somewhere Near the East Coast, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

Gee honey it sounds like you really had a fine day Sunday at the park. How I would have loved to be with you. I know that the children must have had a wonderful time swinging and swimming and climbing all topped off with a picnic. It has been a long time since they have had a day devoted so exclusively to them and to things that they like to do. It must have made them feel quite important. I am glad that you had a good time too.

Our company punishment that I wrote you about has been somewhat alleviated today. After tonight we will no longer be restricted to the regimental area so I will be able to get another pass tomorrow night. However we are still on call for fatigue details so I am on k.p. again tomorrow. K.p. is a long hard day and two days in succession is longer and harder so I must get to bed. Goodnight darling. I love you.

Hews

September 29, 1944, Somewhere Near the East Coast, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

What a week this has been. They are about to k.p. me to death. I was on duty as a k.p. Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and my name is on the list again for Saturday. Five times in one week is much too much. I surely do hope this doesn't continue long but there is no let-up in sight. The men have been given so much detail work that they have become very discontented. We were all in pretty good spirits when we arrived at this camp but now the morale is so low that it has practically disappeared. I had hoped to get into New York tomorrow (payday) in time to do some shopping but I won't be able to get in now.

The weather here has been quite warm day and night every day this week. It was foggy and rainy yesterday but it was clear again today. Tonight it is beginning to turn cold again. The temperature change in twenty four hours is more extreme here than it is in the south and I'm having a hard time getting used to it. So far I have stayed well but I'm feeling a little sniffley tonight. I hope I don't develop a cold now. The long hours and hard work I've been doing have me in poor shape to fight off a cold. Several of the men have developed beaus in the last couple of days. I am going to oil my rifle now and get to bed. They will wake me up in the morning at about 4:15. Goodnight darling. I love you,

Hews

P.S. I'm enclosing Eric's letter and one from Dad for you.

October 3, 1944, Somewhere Near the East Coast, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I got your letter with the baker story today and I nearly laughed myself silly over it. I've retold it several times with great success especially to Arnie Southworth. He was gratifyingly appreciative. Arnie sends his fond regards to you. He says he is still corresponding with Pat Higgins. He admires her a lot and considers her a very intelligent person. Doesn't think that her present marriage will last very long after they are together long enough for the romantic new to wear off.

Life (G.I.) at the camp is just one darned unpleasant detail after another. This time it was guard duty at the camp stockade. It was a relief after so much k.p. though at that. I was fortunate enough to get hospital guard duty. It was pretty cold last night and the men guarding the stockade fence were very uncomfortable. I was in a steam heated hospital ward. One other man and I were on duty together for two four hour hitches in the psychopathic ward. We only had two prisoners to watch and they were both very docile. One was a colored dope addict and the other was a white chronic awol with a bad inferiority complex because of his physical inadequacy (5'8 @ 106#) and bad depression. The colored boy had a very restless night after a spinal tap but he didn't give us any trouble at all. Guard duty is a strain though and I always feel all in when I get off. Goodnight darling, keep your love warm for me until I can return to you. I love you, Hews

October, 1944 – Letter No. 1, Aboard a troop ship, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I guess that it will be quite a long time before you receive this letter. I can't even turn it in for censorship until we reach our destination. I expect to have several to turn in by that time. I must keep writing to you even though I can't mail my letters. That is the only contact I can maintain with you. I hope that you are writing too. I look forward more eagerly now

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than ever before to receiving mail from home. Another phase of my part of the war is over, and I am on the way to some part of the world where, I hope, my experiences in the past year may be justified. When I came out on deck this morning there was nothing to be seen but the broad smooth Atlantic. I have read of the "glassy surface of the ocean" but I never quite believed that the ocean could be as still as it is now. There are no swells at all except those caused by the wake of our ship. In places there are streaks of absolutely still water. Most of the surface is broken by small wind ripples. I have often seen the surface of Lake Ponchartrain in the same condition. The colors of the water are very beautiful. The underlying and most dominant color is a deep cerulean blue of great purity and with an indefinable quality of transparency. Over all is a much broken sheen of silver of great transparency. It has a peculiar quality. If you look for the silver sheen the blue becomes submerged and almost lost. If you look for the blue you almost forget the silver. It's like window shopping. You can look at the reflections in the show windows and never see what is in the window or you can look through the reflections and hardly realize they are there. If this beautiful weather holds we will have a very smooth crossing. We are on a very fine ship. In



peace times it ranked with the best luxury liners. Of course it is terribly crowded now and has been stripped to the barest essentials. As I write I am sitting on the deck, leaning against a stack of life rafts. The decks are very crowded. All around me are groups of men playing dice and card games or bingo. Many other men wander aimlessly around. There is always a long double line of men at the top and at the bottom of each stair. We must stand in interminable lines for everything especially the two meals we get each day. Fortunately I am not suffering from homesickness although I miss you very much. I had completely reconciled myself to this separation long before we embarked. Some day, soon I hope, I will return. It is that assurance that sustains me. I love you very much.

Hews

Albert Hews McCann, Jr. on right

October, 1944 – Letter No. 2 V-mail, Aboard a troop ship, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello My Sweet,



Albert Hews McCann, Jr. enroute to France

I wrote you a long letter yesterday but this V-mail is faster so here is a note to tell you how much I love you and miss you. I'm writing from the lonesome middle of the (censored). Not that I don't have plenty of company. Indeed the boat is so crowded that it is difficult to walk on deck. But that is the kind of company that emphasizes loneliness. Every mile that we travel is widening the breach between us, yet I am very close to you darling despite the distance that separates us. You are never quite out of my thoughts; you are so much a part of me. For once I can't say that I wish you were with me. The discomforts of this trip are too great for me to wish to share them with the one I love. It is comforting and inspiring though to know that you are waiting for me there keeping

a warm love for me to return to. That's the one thing that makes all this worth while. Pray with me for a quick return sweetheart. I know you do. Kiss my babies for me often. I love you.

Hews

October, 1944 – Letter No. 3, Aboard a troop ship, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello My Darling,

The sea has been a little less kind to us for the last two days than it was at first. It is as tho she had put her best foot forward in order to entice us out then gave us a little taste of her force after she had us in her power in the interest of instilling discipline. The army is that way. They put on a glittering and glamorous front until you take the OATH!! then the first thing they give you is two weeks of details – k.p., latrine, provost, etc. – just to humble the recruit and make him properly receptive to discipline. We haven't had any serious weather but the sky has been overcast for the past two days and there has been a steady strong wind. There were plenty of whitecaps yesterday but only heavy swells today. The waves have been high enough to cause our boat to rock and pitch appreciably but it is a very slow



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and sedate rolling as becomes a ship of this size and magnificence. There has been enough rolling, though, to cause a marked increase in the incidence of sea sickness – we weren't given any preventive medicine. The chow lines are decimated. One sitting in our mess hall was completely eliminated tonight at supper. So far I haven't been affected and my appetite is something to marvel at despite my inactivity. The sea has changed color during the overcast. For two days it has been dead black with no hint left of its original beautiful blue. The surface still retains its beautiful silver sheen though. In the swirls of foam along the sides of the ship the water is a dirty unhealthy green. Sometimes you can catch glimpses of rainbows in the spray thrown up as the ship plows thru a wave. Some of the rainbows have golden tints in them. I love you,

Hews

October, 1944 – Letter No. 4, Aboard a troop ship, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart

Everyone is on deck now and it is very crowded. All the quarters must be cleaned up and ready for inspection by eleven o'clock in the morning and everyone is chased outside. They start the inspection at noon. There is generally an 'emergency stations' drill at about (time has been censored) in the (time has been censored) which lasts from (time has been censored) and no one can return to quarters until after the drill is over. I take a book and my stationery on deck about ten thirty and find a place where I can sit down before the mob arrives. I'm sitting on the deck now leaning against a steel bulkhead – there are very few benches. I certainly could put a deck chair to good use but there just aren't any. I've been writing a lot and I have read several good books. The army's special services division issues free pocket sized editions to us at p.o.e. They are a little smaller than the Pocketbooks and are bound on the short edge of the sheets which is rather a nuisance. I've been enjoying them immensely tho. I read on to William Saroyan's books yesterday, "My Name is Aram". There is one passage in it which I liked very much. He has found words to express something that I've often felt and never could say. I want to quote to you. It will sound a little strange perhaps being lifted bodily from the middle of a conversation but the thought will be there. Read the book if you can – I think you will enjoy it. Here's the quote: ---



What did they talk about I asked my mother?

I didn't listen, my mother said.

Did they talk at all? I said.

I don't know, my mother said.

They didn't, I said.

Some people talk when they have something to say, my mother said, and some people don't.

How can you talk if you don't say anything? I said.

You talk without words. We are always talking without words.

Well, what good are words, then?

Not very good most of the time. Most of the time they're only good to keep back what you really want to say or something you don't want to know.

Well do they talk? I said.

I think they do, my mother said. They just sit and sip coffee and smoke cigarettes. They never open their mouths, but they're talking all the time. They understand one another and don't need to open their mouths. They have nothing to keep back.

Do they really know what they're talking about? I said.

Of course, my mother said.

Well what is it! I said.

I can't tell you, my mother said, because it isn't in words; but they know.

I really like that a lot especially the line "They --- don't need to open their mouths. They have nothing to keep back". What an indictment of thoughtless volubility that is. And the shrewd and calculating volubility too. And practically every other kind of volubility.

The sea is quite still again today and the wind has died down a lot. The sun is shining brightly again from a very clear and very blue sky. The ship is steady again except for a slight roll when we make one of the frequent changes of course. That course has been most erratic. We dart aimlessly over the ocean without apparent rhyme or purpose. If the poor navigator has any hair left at all it can be no more than tousled shreds. His must be a nerve wracking job under such adverse circumstances. I'm tired of writing for a while now darling. I think I'll join the 'wanderers around aimlessly' and let one of them have my seat. I love you very much.

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Hews

October, 1944 – Letter , Aboard a troop ship, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello My Darling,

This has come to be the nicest part of the day for me, when I can sit down quietly and talk to you for awhile. I am very



impatient until the ship's inspection is over and I can return to my compartment where I can sit on my bunk away from the crowded decks and canteen and be alone with you. I wish I could hear from you. I want so much to know what you are doing and how your music is coming along and what's happening at the office and what parties you are going to and how the children's tonsils are and is the Red Cross going to do anything about them and how they are doing in school – does Cecile seem to be adjusting herself to it all right – and what you are doing on Sundays now – have you had any more picnics – and all the everyday ordinary little things that happen to you everyday and what your mother is doing even. And have you done anymore investigating about the hows of college? Don't wait too long and don't put it off. Why not plan definitely for matriculation next fall! That's the earliest possible date I suppose and it's quite possible. Find out about college board

exams. I expect that it will be necessary and desirable to take them in order to get an acceptable evaluation of the knowledge I've acquired since I left school. I wonder if it would be worth while to take a series of reliable aptitude tests to confirm the wisdom of my choice of professions or indicate before its too late that I would be more adaptable to some other field. I think Columbia U. gives these tests for a nominal fee. I expect that I might be able to take them next time I'm in N.Y. What do you think of the idea? If you like it you might write Columbia and get some details and an idea of the costs and time it would take.

The weather has changed drastically here. Late yesterday afternoon we ran into a heavy fog bank that clung to the water in spite of a strong breeze. During the night the wind became very strong and cold. When I awakened at six o'clock this morning the ship was rolling and pitching in heavy swells capped with great streamers of foam and spray. The wind was whipping the spray far above the water's surface onto our deck. Our deck is about as far above the water as a fourth story window is above the street. The swells were running as high as twenty feet and their surfaces were covered with smaller white capped waves. It was quite exciting and I stayed on deck a long time watching the abandoned wildness of the scene. I think I'll go back and watch some more. Au revoir sweetheart. I love you very much,

Hews

October 18, 1944 , Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,



We have certainly been doing some strenuous moving around since we left our ship. I am in France now – so far that is all I can tell you about our travels, they will make some good letters later. We had our first mail call today at last, thank goodness, and I got several letters from you that pepped me up considerably. The post-marks ranged from Sept. 23 to Oct. 5. I guess we'll have regular – more or less – mail calls now and I will get caught-up.



Hews McCann just off ship in France

I'm feeling fine in spite of lots of rain and the proverbial French mud which exceeds Louisiana and my expectations. Even grassy fields are muddy and it rains every fifteen minutes. We got a little hail this morning – it's pretty cold and we are in pup tents – and mud. I love you,

Hews

October 19, 1944, Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

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Hello sweetheart,
Today has been free of rain for a welcome change and our bivouac looks like blue Monday. There are blankets and clothes hung on all the tents and on makeshift clotheslines and bushes all over the place. It surely is a relief to be able to dry out. We have been working and eating and riding in the rain every day and sleeping in wet clothes on wet blankets every night and we had almost given up hope of getting dry again. So far we haven't seen much of France – we moved in the middle of the night – and very little of the French. We are restricted to our regimental area for the time being. I think we will have more liberties soon though. We have been through several little villages and all of them were pretty badly torn up by bombing, artillery, and fire. Its heart – breaking to see the terrible destruction that the war has brought to this country. All the churches I've seen had been

wrecked. I suppose that the possibility of using them for observation posts made them irresistible targets. The second day we were in France I was made a squad leader which is very gratifying but brings me a great deal of extra work and responsibility. I am glad to have the responsibilities though. I've always worked best in responsible jobs. Au revoir darling, I love you, Hews

October 20, 1944 , Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

One muddy day follows the other rather monotonously here. It rains almost continuously all night and spasmodically during the day. Always it is muddy. We are still marking time in pup tents getting organized after our travels. Our officers are describing a very pleasant future for us though. We may even be lucky enough to have barracks next time we move. What a break that would be. I took a long walk in the rain along the lanes around our bivouac area this morning. I was surprised to see how many French families had moved back to their farms in spite of extensive war damage. A great many buildings have been badly wrecked by bombs and artillery. Many farm houses will have to be rebuilt before they can be occupied. There must have been some fierce fighting here. There is plenty of war material laying around but I'm no souvenir hound so I'll let it lay. I guess Dorothy will have her 7th birthday before you get this letter. I can't send her anything but a heart full of love. I hope she has a lovely birthday with lots of nice presents. Tell her I love her and think of her often, and that I expect her to work hard at school and help out at home and say her prayers every night. I love you darling,

Hews



October 23, 1944 , Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Darling,

I hope you'll forgive me for not writing more often just now. Life is very difficult in this bivouac. Imagine if you can how cramped and uncomfortable it is for four men to live and keep all their possessions in a tent six feet wide and fourteen feet long, three feet high in the center and no side walls. Outside is a sea of mud and almost constant rain. My raincoat stays on the ground under by blankets so that I can be dry at night. There is no place to sit down outside so I stay in the tent as much as possible. It is often necessary to go out though to get a detail of men to carry drinking water or rations or mess kit washing water, or to go to the chow line, etc. Today I had my first bath since leaving New York. It was a hot shower in a portable shower room. I certainly did feel good when I finished it. We were allowed six minutes to complete our bath. Yesterday afternoon was sunny and I had a nice walk along the country lanes. A farmer sold me some good cider for ten cents a quart. I love you darling.

Hews

October 23, 1944, Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello sweetheart, I just wrote you a v – mail letter but I find it very difficult to express myself by v – mail because they are so cramped. I also wrote to mother and to Lee. Lee wrote me a nice letter hoping we could get together while I was in New York - I got the letter the other day in France. I couldn't have seen her anyhow unless she had come to New York and I

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never knew in advance when I could get out of camp so it would all have been very uncertain and indefinite. I'm awfully glad that you like the records I sent. I think Cecil's remark was very complimentary and I love her for it. I had such a big lump in my throat when I made them that I could hardly talk, especially yours. I was afraid that they were too incoherent and you wouldn't like them. I wanted to say something sprightly and gay but I just couldn't. I was feeling too homesick and lonesome. That has become a sort of dull ache and empty feeling now. I feel so far away from all I love and it is so impossible to get back to you now that I am like half a person with the best have taken away. I go through the day as though I were dreaming and I won't wake up until we are together again. At night when I lie down on the ground to go to sleep I think of you so hard and wish for you so much that it seems as though you must feel how much I yearn for you. But when I am going to sleep you are just finishing your lunch. I have only received mail from you twice. Three letters three days ago and two more to day dated October 9, and October 11. One of them had a \$10.00 bill in it. It was very sweet of you to send it darling but you'd better not send any more unless I asked for it. So far I've needed very little money and I have \$70.00. Prices for the few things we are able to buy are very low. The franc is only worth 2¢ of American money but it will buy a lot here. Cider (very good) is five francs a quart and cigarettes are two packages for five francs, Etc.. We can buy tobacco, candy, razor blades, etc.. Once a week at p.x. Everything is rationed but we get plenty. I would like for you to send me some food occasionally. You can send 5lbs. a month without a request. Salt is very scarce hear so as a special request please send me 5lbs. of salt. Show this request at the post office and it will go through okay as a special package. Send me Jack's address. I may be able to see him yet. It's supper time now so I'll have to stop writing. I hope you get through the tonsillectomies all right. I miss you all very much. Love my children for me. I love you, Hews . P.S. Your letters are not censored.

October 26, 1944 , Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

October 26, 1944 .
Hello Darling,
We have moved again and this time we have moved out of the mud at last. We are comfortably (?) billeted in old german box cars on the outskirts of a french town. I even have an innerspring for a bed. The innerspring mattress used to be a seat in an automobile but it surely did feel good last night. The box cars have a lot of bullet holes in them but they have new roofing on them and they look as good as a hotel to us. After we manage for some stoves and some kind of lights we will really live in style. The box cars were a pleasant surprise to us when we arrived here. We had been told that we would live in squad tents - 16 men in a tent sixteen feet wide and thirty two feet long. We got the tents all right, they are stacked

by the side of the railroad and I hope they stay there. They are a big improvement over pup tents but these wonderful box cars cant be touched by any tent. I had a bit of luck a minute ago. Two english soldiers came by with three quarts of Johnny Walker Red Label Scotch which they wanted to sell. I managed to get in the front of the mad rush and bought the first bottle for six hundred francs (\$12.00) that was so easy that the other two bottles went for eight hundred francs. Arnie was just in to sample my bottle and chew the rag for a minute, he bought one of the other bottles and thought it was cheap until he found out what I paid. He sends you his fond regards and wants you to tell Pat that he intends to write her. I'm glad the kids liked the purses so much - give them a big hug and kiss for me. I love you sweetheart,
Hews

Hello Darling,

We have moved again and this time we have moved out of the mud at last. We are comfortably (?) billeted in old German box cars on the outskirts of a French town. I even have an innerspring for a bed. The innerspring mattress used to be a seat in an automobile but it surely did feel good last night. The box cars have a lot of bullet holes in them but they have new roofing on them and they look as good as a hotel to us. After we manage for some stoves and some kind of lights we will really live in style. The box cars were a pleasant surprise to us when we arrived here. We had been told that we would live in squad tents - 16 men in a tent sixteen feet wide and thirty two feet long. We got the tents all right, they are stacked by

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the side of the railroad and I hope they stay there. They are a big improvement over pup tents but these wonderful box cars can't be touched by any tent. I had a bit of luck a minute ago. Two English soldiers came by with three quarts of Johnny Walker Red Label Scotch which they wanted to sell. I managed to get in the front of the mad rush and bought the first bottle for six hundred francs (\$12.00) that was so easy that the other two bottles went for eight hundred francs. Arnie was just in to sample my bottle and chew the rag for a minute, he bought one of the other bottles and thought it was cheap until he found out what I paid. He sends you his fond regards and wants you to tell Pat that he intends to write her. I'm glad the kids liked the purses so much – give them a big hug and kiss for me. I love you sweetheart.

Hews

October 29, 1944, Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello My Darling,

I've had to miss writing to you for two days now but it was certainly not by choice I assure you. I expect that I will have to miss many days before I get back to the U.S. I've been working on a job that kept me out from 6:15 in the morning until 7:00 at night. Its been hard wet muddy work and I've been too tired at night to do anything but fall in bed and sleep. The job is finished now but more jobs are sure to follow. Today is Sunday and I was able to get away from our box car camp for a few hours. As I was walking along the street I was adopted by four French children – 3 girls four, six and ten years old, and one boy four years old. I went home with them and we had a fine time playing on their swing. I pushed. I enjoyed myself very much. You would be amazed as I am to see how well I can make myself understood in French now although pantomime still makes up the majority of my vocabulary. My pronunciation of the words I know is easily understood by young and old. I accumulate more words daily. Verbs are the major stumbling block of course.

Goodnight sweetheart, I love you very much, Hews

October 30, 1944, Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I surely do wish that you could have been with me on that trip across England. Someday we must come back together, I know that you will enjoy it as much as I did. All of the English countryside that I saw looked like it had been designed and executed by one superb landscape architect. The whole country is similar enough in appearance to give the effect of one architectural style yet there is enough variation to prevent boredom. There were no heavily wooded areas as there are in the U.S. nor were there any completely bare areas to compare with our plains in the middle west. All the trees in England seem to be purposely placed in exactly the right places for the best appearance. It is impossible to adequately describe the scene. Practically every building and every bridge are built of stone. I have never seen so much stone work or so many stone arches before. All the construction looks like it has been there forever and will last forever. Even the fences are built of stone although many of the fields are subdivided by hedges. All the fields and trees and houses have a neat well kept appearance that is strongly contrasted by the unkempt French countryside. I would like to spend a month motoring around England. I must stop now and get to bed. Goodnight darling, I love you.

Hews

November 1, 1944, Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

We've started a new job but this time we are not working in the mud which is a welcome relief. We are working outdoors though, of course, so we still get the benefit of the rain and fog and wind. The work is very heavy and entails a lot of carrying of heavy loads so I'm pretty tired at night. It is good to be working on something worthwhile though – most of the men seem to be glad to be working. The company is starting another job next week and I think that I am going to be taken off the job I'm on now and put on the new job. If so I will be doing something quite new for me. The job is a little dangerous but I don't think that I will have any trouble. The greatest danger is carelessness and I don't intend to indulge in that. Our censorship has been lessened and I can now tell you more about where I have been. We landed in France on the Normandy Peninsula about in the middle of the invasion coast. From there we moved to a bivouac area near Cherbourg. A few men in the company were able to get into Cherbourg but I wasn't so fortunate. We have moved to another town on the Normandy Peninsula now but we are quite a distance from Cherbourg. That's about as close as I can come to my present location. Goodnight darling, I love you.

Hews

November 1, 1944, Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

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I just finished drinking half a bottle (large) of good De Lossy Champagne. What a treat that was. I had to drink it from an aluminum canteen cup which certainly detracted from the enjoyment of the queen of beverages and it wasn't quite cold enough in the absence of ice but I enjoyed it thoroughly. And completely. Not to mention ecstatically. The price we paid for the champagne is a little difficult to ascertain. I bartered for the bottle. I gave four bars of ivory soap, one Palmolive, five lifebuoy, two pkgs. of Prince Albert and two Phillip Morris. The prevailing retail prices here for those commodities are about 350 francs total (\$7.00). I only paid sixty cents for them though. Please send me twenty four bars of face soap as a request package. When you send non-request packages – one per month – include cigarettes and face soap - I can trade them at the rate of 25 francs – fifty cents – per each. And the people would rather have them than money. I have to give the laundry women soap to do my washing. One cake for my clothes and two cakes pay, I got a letter from you yesterday that surely was welcome. It was my first mail in nine days. No mail had arrived for the company at all during that time and we had very little then. When, and if, they get our mail straightened out I should have a bonanza mail call. I haven't gotten any packages from you or mother yet. Your letter enclosed Lee's which I enjoyed immensely. I wrote her. I love you,

Hews

November 6, 1944, Somewhere near Cherbourg, Hews McCann, Jr.,



Hello sweetheart ,

I've been on the move so much for the last few days that I haven't been able to do justice to my letter writing. Tonight I am going to make time to write a letter. Friday I had a long truck ride up to a camp near Cherbourg where I attended a one day school. We stayed overnight there and returned the next day. We rode through Cherbourg and I got my first sight of the city. The portion of the city that we thought was only slightly damaged during the fighting there. I guess that most of the bombing and artillery was confined to the dock area. Most of the infantry fighting was done outside the city. On the way back we passed through St. Lo. There is another town that has been completely destroyed by bombing. The American troops had their hardest battles at St. Lo and were unable to take the town until after it had been leveled by bombing. It is

easy to see why this was such a difficult sector to take from the Germans. The terrain around the town is ideally suited for defense. The principle defensive position is a high rock cliff on one side of a river. On the other side of the river is a wide treeless swampy meadow (on this side of the river a way from the town). Farther from the river the meadows rise in gently rolling hills. The meadows are divided into fields by earth terraces which are three to five ft. high which form perfect breastwork work. The only trees in the country except the apple orchards grow on these terraces. Many bushes and brambles fill the spaces between the trees and give perfect concealment for defending the rifle men. The attackers are forced to cross wide bare fields in the face of fire from an unseen enemy. Many lanes run through the countryside and they are invariably eight to fifteen ft. lower than the fields with very steep banks. The sides of the lanes are full of dugouts, machine gun emplacement and artillery emplacements. The more I see of the German defensive preparations the harder it is to understand how the Allies were able to rest this country from the Germans at all. The speed with which they took the Normandy peninsula is almost inconceivable when you see the terrain where the fighting took place. We started Sunday on our new job. We have to take a long truck ride to get to the place where we are working. So we leave at dawn and get back in the dark. The truck ride itself is very fatiguing. The work we are doing causes us to walk all day across the fields carrying heavy equipment. By the time we get in and get some leftovers for supper I am ready for bed and not much else. I sleep well though. I wish that I could work in a little recreation somehow, the work is monotonous. I haven't been able to study my French grammar very much lately but my conversation is improving by practice. I am picking up many words through my dictionary. I have a lot of fun trying to talk to the French people. It's still pretty painful and I always have to ask them to parlez lentement s'il vous plait but we get along together famously and eventually manage to make ourselves mutually understood. I hope my mail is getting through better than yours. Mail service here is very sketchy and inadequate. We get four to ten letters a day now for the company. We recently went nine days without any mail. I don't know where it is piling up. Goodnight darling. I love you very much, Hews

November 7, 1944 , Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

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I got two more letters from you today – postmarked Oct. 21 & Oct. 26. It surely was good to hear from you again. I do wish though that they could get our mail situation straightened out so I could get my letters more regularly. They are the highest point of the day when they come. I'm glad that you have started getting my letters to you. All the letters I wrote on board ship were mailed at the same time. The first to arrive - #2 – was not a V-mail letter which surprised me. I guess it doesn't make much difference what kind of letter you write, they are all delayed. It must be the Christmas rush that is causing so much confusion. I think that I will be able to get some air mail stamps soon which may help some. I don't think that I'll try to write continued letters on V-mail paper. There is too much likelihood of having some of the sheets lost or delayed. Whenever I have time I'll write you a long letter and will try to send it by air mail. I went to a British vaudeville show tonight after working all day in the rain. It was terrible – I wish I had stayed in by the fire. Goodnight darling. I love you very much.

Hews

November 19, 1944, Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

We moved again last night. It was the easiest and simplest move we have ever made. They simply hooked an engine to our box cars and away we went. We kept the fire going in our stove and slept comfortably in our bunks the whole way. It certainly was an improvement over the open trucks we had moved in before. We are on a riding now to a nice grassy meadow. We have been working all day putting up a latrine tent and a dining room tent and getting our electric lights rigged up and salvaging lumber to build things to make our bivouac convenient and comfortable. We did not move very many miles this time, and we are still in Normandy, but we did move far enough for me to be able to tell you where we moved from. We have been staying in Caen on the Oere river on the north east corner of the peninsula. The British and Canadian troops fought at Caen and had as hard a time as the Americans had at St. Lo. Before they took the town it was almost completely destroyed by bombing and artillery. Many of the evacuated civilians have been coming back to town but most of them find only piles of rubble and rubbish where their homes and stores had been. I have not seen a single building that did not have some damage done to it by shells or bombs. No more paper and not much time so good night darling, I love you, Hews

Sun. November 19, 1944, Normandy Peninsula, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello darling, I got another very welcome letter from you today – written on November 4 and postmarked November 6. What happened, did you carry it around in your purse for a couple of days? Don't let it become a habit please!! Was quite intrigued over Bill's troubles until you remembered censors habit of reading letters and left me dangling. The censor wouldn't know who bill is and would probably only be bored by his problems. I am very interested though so elucidate gal. Anyhow your letters are not censored, only mine. None of us has received any censored mail from home. I hope that everyone who has asked for my address has written. So far I haven't received mail from anyone except you and mother. My mail receipts are still very haphazard. Some weeks go by without any mail, some weeks I get two to four letters from you and mother combined. I am sure that I am getting only a small part of my mail. I have not received any packages yet but other men are getting packages so mine should start arriving soon. One man today received four. He certainly hit the jackpot. My French conversation is improving slowly but steadily. Strangely my greatest difficulty is finding opportunities to converse with the French people around here. I see less of the French people than I did of the civilians around Camp Claiborne. I am enlarging my vocabulary and improving my vocabulary though. I haven't tried to formulate any opinions about France. I'm seeing the country under the most adverse conditions and most of what I've seen has been badly war – wrecked. The most destructive part of the war in France was fought right here on the Normandy peninsula and it is a sad sight. There used to be some nice church architecture around here but it just isn't now. Good night sweetheart, I love you, Hews

November 22, 1944, Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello darling ,

I'm short on time again tonight so I'll have to manage as best I can with this v – mail. We had another wet and windy day today but it has warmed up a lot so we weren't too uncomfortable I don't have to do as much cross country walking in the work I'm doing now as I did on the mine detection job. I'm doing lots of work every day but I don't feel completely worn out and whipped down as I have been feeling. Tomorrow is thanksgiving in the states but here it's just another Thursday. There was a rumor about frozen turkeys and dehydrated cranberry sauce for dinner but they didn't arrive. There is still a vague hope that they will arrive tomorrow morning I hope, I hope. According to the stars and stripes the tobacco shortage in the states has gotten past the critical stage. Has it affected you much? I wonder where the cigarettes are going. There is a shortage here too. We have been cut down to four packages of American cigarettes per week. We get more in English than American cigarettes. As cigarettes go English varieties are pretty vague. It's the beer companion in reverse. Goodnight sweetheart, I love you. Hews

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December 2, 1944, In a Military Hospital, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello darling, today is my tenth day in hospital and the first that I have been able to write. My right hand is done up in a large dressing and it is very awkward to hold the pen and make it do right. I am under treatment for a septic hand and foot and a spot of lymphangitis under the bicep of my right arm near the elbow. My elbow also has a bulky dressing on it so I am not able to use my right arm or hand. I am in a tent ward of a British general hospital where I am getting excellent treatment and care. I was on sulpha-thiozol for five days but it has been discontinued. My foot is healing nicely but my hand is still draining. I'm getting daily saline soaks now and dressings with sulpha-nilimide powder and an antiseptic solution. This is my first day out of bed and I feel pretty week but fairly healthy. I expect to be here for several more days. The food here comes often – six times a day – but doesn't taste very good when it arrives. No seasoning. I'll try to write every day now sweetheart. I love you, Hews

Mon. December 4, 1944, In a Military Hospital, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Darling, I just got a letter from you dated October 14 telling me that the children were almost over there tonsillectomies and about your unfortunate experiences with the roaches in Cecile's bed. It's the first I've heard of the operations since a letter about three weeks ago in which you said that you had gone to a new doctor and would have the operations as soon as the children recovered from colds. I guess the back – log of mail will finally bring me the complete story. The mail situation here is not improving a bit. I guess it won't until after Christmas. I'm very glad that you have the ordeal behind you. I hope that this will help Cecile to hear better. Were their adenoids removed as well? How are the children getting along with their schoolwork? You seldom mention it but I'm very interested. I got a letter from Gretel today telling me that she had had a very good time at your party and giving me the address of a friend of hers in France. I'm glad you had her over she's very nice and I don't think she has many pleasures. I enjoyed her letter very much and I appreciated her thinking of me. Please tell her so for me – I doubt that I'll be able to write for myself. Thanks for the two addresses you sent me – London and Cambridge If I ever get a few days in England I'll use them. I wish you'd send me Jack's address. I'd like to have it too. I think that it's grand for you to be going to Shreveport for Christmas. I know you'll have a good time there. I'll bet the children are excited about it. We are supposed to have a special turkey dinner again Christmas Day but it will be a work day. I'll have to eat twice as much turkey that day to make up for what I missed Thanksgiving Day. I began to get sick on Thanksgiving Day and had no lunch or supper. By supper time I had a temperature of 102° I've had chicken twice in the hospital though We have quite a schedule of meals here in the hospital – breakfast at 8:00, tea (only) at ten, lunch at 12:00, tea and sandwiches at 4:00, supper at 6:30, and cocoa at 9:00. The outpatients, including me now, wait on the bed patients, get the meals from the kitchen and distribute them, collect the dirty plates and cups and silver after meals and keep the ward cleaned. We don't mind at all though. It's better to have a few little jobs to do than to be idle all the time. We still have plenty of time to ourselves and I've been doing a lot of reading. It still rains almost constantly. It surely is a relief to be out of it for awhile. This is my eleventh day in the hospital. I expect that I will be here three or four days more. Good night sweetheart, I love you very much,
Hews P. S. I've a new A.P.O. number – 562

Tues. December 5, 1944, In a Military Hospital, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello darling, I'm at the end of eleventh day in hospital and there is still no indication as to when I'll get out. There was another new pocket of pus on my finger this morning and as long as they keep forming I doubt that I stand any chance of being discharged – it's not that that hurts my feelings because I am enjoying a good rest in the dry that is very pleasant now that I'm feeling good again. (That got to be an awfully long drawn out sentence before it finally played out didn't it? The finger has acted very peculiar. It started out commonly enough with a pusty sore on the second joint which was surrounded by an inflamed swollen area and red streaks running up the back of my hand. Then the second morning that I was in hospital I woke up and found a very large blister on that finger. A blister was half filled with yellow pus and half with a clear liquid – a two toned job. The blister was drained with a hypodermic needle. The next morning the blister was back again about twice its original size. This time they cut the skin to drain it. In a couple of days they clipped off all the dead skin and exposed a very broad and tender me beneath it. The place has gradually dried up but pockets of new pus keep forming in the good skin around the injured area. I've lost an awful lot of good skin that way. I'm slowly being flayed. I'm improving rapidly though and may be out of here by the end of the week. You should see me in my traditional British hospital – patients guard. It consists of a loose suit of heavy material – pants, vest and coat – of a brilliant though fairly dark blue. There is also a very loose white broadcloth slipover shirt that reaches below my knees. The ensemble is climactically completed by a necktie of the brightest most brilliant red you can imagine. I love that tie. The color scheme is quite patriotic but a little startling. We are nursed very competently by female English nurses who are insulted if they are called nurse. They are all first lieutenants. Their title is "sister" which seemed odd to me until one of them explained why. They have three titles in the course of their training. First they are called student nurse – corresponding two un – capped student nurses in the states – then they are called just plain "nurse" until they graduate and obtain the coveted title "sister" – the "sister" deal is a traditional hangover

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from the days when all nursing was done by nuns. They are a cheery lot and it's a pleasure to have them around. There are a couple of French Algerian up – patients sitting at the table next to me playing a very heated series of games of a rather peculiar variation of checkers. They speak a bewildering mixture of French and "afrique". There are five of them in the war – all are liberated prisoners of war of three years seniority. Goodnight sweetheart I love you very much, Hews Note the new A.P.O. number 562

Wed. December 6, 1944, In a Military Hospital, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Darling,

My hand is much better today. There was no sign of infection. All the affected areas show promise of healing rapidly now. This is my thirteenth day in hospital – it's about time they were healing, isn't it? I will be glad to get back to work again. I'm better off over here when I am working hard all day and am too tired at night to do anything but sleep. Occasionally I get a day off though and I might be able to get out and do some sketching. I haven't been able to locate any soft pencils here so I wish you would send me an assorted half dozen from 2-B. to 6-B. I can't promise anything startling but I should keep in practice a little you'd better include a ruby eraser and a piece of art gum too. Think you'll find some in my briefcase. I ordered an army correspondence course in calculus before we left Clyborne but all I have received is a card acknowledging my application. Goodnight sweetheart I love you, hews

Thurs. December 7, 1944, In a Military Hospital, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello sweetheart, the medical aid man was supposed to bring me some airmail stamps today but he didn't show up so I guess that today's contributions will be delayed in transit. We had a little excitement in the hospital today to vary the routine. One of the nurses, a lieutenant, was married to a British sergeant who is stationed at the hospital. A wedding chariot was built for them out of scrap lumber and the rubber tired wheels from two stretcher carts. It was built to resemble a jeep and was powered by a tow rope which was manned by part of the wedding party. After they were married in a Nissen hut recreation room they were merrily towed off through a shower of rice, which is plentiful here to the accompaniment of the raucous music of an assortment of cans attached to the back of their vehicle. The bride was very attractive in her dress uniform of a light grayish blue. The groom, of course, wore his khaki battle dress. They made a pleasant picture and looked very happy though a little self – conscience, as they walked, not ran, down the path. This is my fourteenth day in hospital and I still have no idea when I'll get out. The rain continues unabated. I wish I could hope that the rainy season would be over by the time I get out but I'm beginning to suspect that all the seasons in Normandy are rainy seasons. There are two more new little patches of pus on my finger this morning. The infection is working toward the end of my finger. It is the third finger of my right hand that is affected. I have no skin now on the top and sides from the third knuckle to a point about halfway between the first and second knuckles. I'm supposed to be looked at tomorrow by a major, a skin specialist, who examined and prescribed for me ten days ago. A lieutenant colonel was around today on a spot check and fault finding tour and he was much incensed to find that the diagnosis on my card indicated that I was admitted to hospital for treatment of chills and fever which disappeared on the second or third day. The septic hand undoubtedly caused the fever but he insisted that I be re-diagnosed so that the card would justify my long treatment. I guess I've been re – diagnosed by now. I suppose he was right but he certainly was a pompous old goat. It's cold in this tent ward. I'm shivering as I sit here writing. It's a substantial double tent – really two tents, one inside the other – but the only heat comes from three small kerosene heaters – the Britishers call kerosene paraffin for no apparent good reason. The tent is about sixteen by 50ft. and the three little heaters make very little impression. It's getting late now and I'm getting sleepy so I think I'll call it a day and get to bed. Goodnight sweetheart. I love you very very much and I miss you like the devil all the time. Hews

Fri. December 8, 1944, In a Military Hospital, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I miss you an awful lot over here. It's terrible to be so far away from you and to have only the tenuous and unreliable connection with you that is afforded by the mail service. It's bad too to know that I have absolutely no control over my immediate future and no possible way of knowing how much longer this oppressive separation must continue. There is no way of determining from the present battle conditions how much longer the war will last. The Germans are fighting for a lost cause and they must surely realize it by now. But they fight on with unreasoning stubbornness and determination. The allies have not made any really significant gains in the last month. It may be, and I certainly hope, that our lack of aggressiveness was planned to allow the supply lines to be shortened by the development of the Belgian ports. One more concerted offensive might be enough to push through the Siegfried line fortifications and finally crush the German resistance. Even after the war is finished here there is no telling when we will be allowed to return to the States, for there will be a big demand for shipping to move men and materials to the far east. Combat troops returning to the States will, of course, have first priority on available ships and we may have to wait a long time before we can get transportation. It's very depressing to be separated from all that I love and hold dear. I long impatiently for the day when we can be together again and plan our own

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destinies again with some assurance that we have enough freedom and power to mold our destinies according to our own desires and abilities. In the meantime, I live in a state of suspended emotion – doing whatever tasks are assigned to me to the best of my ability but with complete emotional detachment. I am unable to feel any joy or pride in my work however well it may turn out and I am equally unable to be sorry if the work turns out badly. So far as I am concerned emotionally it might as well be someone else doing my work without my knowledge or concern of it. Of course I never get to do any work of a sort that I can really become absorbed in. But even if I could I would be as cold towards it emotionally as I am towards the work that I do. For the spark that can strike fire to my feelings again is you my love and I shall never be warm again until we are together. All my hope and ambition and love are left far far away with your dear self and I have left only the consuming desire to be with you again. All other considerations pale to insignificance before that desire and life would be empty indeed if I were not sustained by the hope that that desire may be consummated before many more weary months have passed. I miss you and long for you far more than I can ever say and my efforts to put it on paper seem very inadequate as I re-read them. I think that you know what I am feeling though. It is as though the part of me that feels and loves and hopes and has pride and ambition had been removed from me and left in your tender care until we are re-united. I love you with all that is good in me and I shall never feel joy again while we are apart. Goodnight my love and my life. Hews

Saturday, December 9, 1944, In a Military Hospital, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello sweetheart, I was moved to a new ward today and lost the seniority rights, if any, that I had accumulated. The old ward was emptied and refilled twice while I was an inmate there. I am now in a ward of skin cases subject to the tender mercies of the local dermatologist. He was a major Taylor who prescribed for me about the day that I was in hospital. This is the sixteenth day and I have almost completely recovered. It seems a little late in the game to be putting me under his daily supervision but it's quite all right with me. It feels a little strange just now to be in a ward where I don't know anyone after becoming so familiar with the nurses and inmates and routine of the other ward. It shouldn't take long for me to familiarize myself here. Though, I got my first box from mother and dad today. A bottle of candy in it helped me to break the ice in the new ward. Than I broke the bottle. I had just finished passing it around and was helping myself when the bottle slipped out of my hand and broke on the concrete floor. Three fourths of the candy rolled out in every direction. It was gumdrops and almonds coated with hard candy. The candy was salvaged. Speaking of ice we have had a generous supply of same today. All day we have had a succession of hail and sleet storms with and without rain. Early this morning the ground was covered with a white blanket of sleet. Most of it stayed on the ground until afternoon. These tent wards are about as warm as a cold storage house and it's getting colder everyday. The only time I'm warm is when I'm in bed with four heavy blankets over me and that's where I'm going to go pretty soon now. I finally got my army correspondence course in calculus yesterday and I am very well pleased with it. They sent a really fine text on differential and integral calculus together with a syllabus giving lesson assignments and very helpful explanation and comment on each lesson. They also provide forms for working out the lesson problems and penalty envelopes for mailing them in to be corrected and graded. I'm so cold and shivery tonight that I must stop now and get to bed. Goodnight darling, I love you, Hews

Sunday, December 10, 1944, In a Military Hospital, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart, I'm very glad that my calculus course has gotten to me at last. I've been occupied more pleasantly since it came than I have since I left the States. I'm getting along famously with it too. There is so little to do in hospital that I can devote most of the day to mathematics which is very all right with me. I haven't forgotten my math as I feared I might have in two days work I have completed the first seven lessons of the correspondence course without a bauble. They aren't short lessons either. The lessons are so arranged that progress is considered satisfactory by the institute if a student completes one lesson per month average. Of course I haven't run across anything yet that was completely new to me but it's a new presentation of the material. I've studied it thoroughly and work the problems with full attention to the principals involved and the details of the mechanical operations. I'm really having myself a hell of a good time. You've no idea what a relief it is to be doing something that depends for its successful outcome on my own reasoning powers instead of 'lay hold-heave'. A little lay hold-heave goes a long way with me – I've never been able to work up anything remotely resembling enthusiasm for it although I've become convinced that it is the basic principle of army engineering (?) work. The fundamental idea seems to be "do it with manpower wherever possible – if it proves to be impossible to do the job with manpower alone then employ the absolute minimum of the most rudimentary machines possible, but by all means in every case the possibilities of manpower alone must be exhausted before any mechanical advantage is employed." We have men who are capable of doing really first class construction work but the jobs we do are never planned in advance and we are never given adequate materials and tools to work with. It's all very discouraging. But this correspondence course gives me something to do that I enjoy doing and gives me a feeling of accomplishing something worthwhile. I can do my own planning and I have very adequate materials to work with. Everything that I accomplish in the way of improving and refreshing my knowledge of mathematics will be of real practical value to me and my work when I return to civil life. I've been so absorbed in calculus all day that I hardly know what has been going on around me in the ward but I haven't been able to ignore the temperature, or lack of it I should say. I've been sitting by a little kerosene heater all day but the heat it puts out is so negligible that I've

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never warmed up enough to stop shivering. The only way you can feel any heat from them at all is to hold your hands directly over and very close to the top of the heater. It's warm enough in bed but it's awful hard to get up in the morning. There's not much news here. The fighting on the western front has quieted down to practically no fighting at all. The Russians are making some pretty good local gains in the vicinity of Budapest. But they aren't engaging in any really big offenses either. Our Air Force and the R.A.F. are bombing hell out of the German lines of communication when ever the weather allows them to fly at all but that's not very often now. The Germans are still managing to put a few flying bombs over the channel but they haven't been doing any very serious damage according to the news. This is my seventeenth day in hospital and a little pus is still forming on my finger. I don't know how much longer this is going on. In spite of the very cold weather it continues to rain every day and I'm grateful for anything that keeps me out of it with no more discomfort than this finger gives me. It's getting pretty late now so I think I'll close up for the night and get into bed where I can warm up. It takes a long time to get the chill off of those sheets though. Goodnight sweetheart I love you very much hews

Monday, December 11, 1944, In a Military Hospital, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello sweetheart, you didn't think I would be with you for Christmas this year did you? But here I am, very much with you and part of you though we are physically many miles apart. No distance that might ever separate us can be too great for our love to bridge. I know that you were having a good Christmas and that mother and dad are doing all they can to make your holiday pleasant. I would like very much to be there with you, but the fulfillment of that desire must be postponed for a little while. In the meantime be comforted as I am by the secure assurance that our love for each other cannot be lessened by this separation. Your love is my consolation and my strength in the face of all trials. It is the source of all my ambitions and it is my greatest triumph. All my ambitions are based in the desire to be worthy of that love. I feel like you were near me always you are constantly in my thoughts. I wish you happiness always and especially now I wish you a very merry Christmas with all my heart. Let yourself go a little and have a good enough time for both of us. Go out with Bill and Lynna for instance and get drunk as a hootie -- owl if you want to. Do something extra special wild and unreasonable then tell me all about it in your next letter. I can't send you my love -- you already have all of it. But let me wish you again a happy merry Christmas, Hews

Tuesday, December 11, 1944, In a Military Hospital, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello my darling, by the time this reaches you, you will have returned from your Christmas holiday and will be writing me all about it. I will watch mail calls with the greatest impatience and eagerness for the letters, telling me about all that you have done and everyone you have seen in Shreveport and what you thought and felt. And I want to know all about the children's Christmas too and I'll be very disappointed if I don't get voluminous letters telling me about everything in great detail. All my Christmas will be in these letters. Oh! what a fine day it will be when we are together again and all the bitter unhappiness of this separation is behind us. My letter -- writing is being seriously interfered with by the calculus and the French. I have to spoon my studies and my writing into the time between supper and lights out -- at 10:00 so my evenings are very full. The calculus especially takes a lot of time. You have to get in the right mood to concentrate and think straight on that stuff and that's not always easy in this atmosphere. I have to budget my time very carefully to get it all in. I'm making good progress though and I'm getting a lot out of my work. I'm in bad shape though if I have to go to bed with a calculus problem partly solved, I lay awake half the night trying to work out a solution in my head. I hope you took some pictures while you were in Shreveport. I'd love to have some. Good night sweetheart I love you very much, Hews

Tuesday, December 12, 1944, In a Military Hospital, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello sweetheart, I don't know how long you are going to stay in Shreveport but I hope this letter reaches you while you are there. I'm using v- mail because it has a better chance of getting through the Christmas mail rush than air mail. I sort of caught up on my back mail yesterday. I got seven airmail letters from you ranging from October 26 to November 27, and three letters from mother and dad. One of your letters, an early one, gave me Jack's address for which I have been wanting. My watch got broken the other day and I will have to send it home to be repaired. It's gotten some pretty rough treatment on my arm. Some how the case was cracked across the hole for the winding stem and the works came out and pulled the winding stem off. I'll send all the parts. The case can be mended or silver-soldered. I'm awfully anxious to hear about your visit to Shreveport. I know you will enjoy being with our friends there again. How are you managing the train ride? It shouldn't be too difficult on the Pullman. I'll bet the children are thrilled and excited about the train ride and Christmas at granny's and papa's house. Love them all good for me. I wish you would send me snapshots of yourself and the children, occasionally. I would love to have some. The photographs I have with me are getting pretty old now. It's late now and I must get ready for bed. Merry Christmas darling, I love you, Hews

Wednesday, December 13, 1944, In a Military Hospital, Hews McCann, Jr.,

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

Hello Sweetheart,

I'm being discharged from the hospital tomorrow at last. Tomorrow will be my twenty first day in hospital. My finger has not healed completely yet but it is progressing satisfactorily and the doctor thinks that it is no longer bad enough to justify keeping me in hospital any longer. So I'm going back to the company with a dry dressing on my finger for protection – no more medication – and an admonition to keep my finger out of water until it heals. I guess that I will be given light duty for a while at the company. I'll have to slow down on my calculus now I guess. I have been working on it almost all day every day. In five days I have completed and mailed in twelve lessons. That should keep the checker busy for a while. I have really enjoyed working on it and I think that I have gotten more out of the intensive work I have done on it than I would have if I had had to spread it out over a long period of time as I will have to do now. I have only found one problem that I could not solve and it was a dilly vis: given the equation of an ellipse and the coordinates of a point outside the ellipse find the equations of the two lines through the points which are tangent to the ellipse! Whew!! I sweated over that one a long time before I finally had to give up. Say – you had a puzzler in your letter of October 24, which I just got. What Sidney did you write a Christmas letter to and why do you hope he doesn't get it and what things have slowed up so you are afraid he will, HUH? Frankly I am amazed not to say dumbfounded at the double bed conversion. John must indeed be a man of strong opinions and no mincing of words. I'm very anxious to meet him. I wonder if he is an advocate of the other physical contact sports. I'm entranced with Bill's coat of arms. Especially that cock on a field of scarlet and the motto. I'm in favor of the impaled fox and I think it would be a very serious omission if the bar sinister were deleted couldn't the five fleur-de-lis of honor be personalized with one initial on the center leaf. In the conventionalization of the fleur de lis that center leaf might well be phallic in origin. If not it can easily be made phallic by adoption. That would make the symbolism the more subtly significant for the initiates. Have you and bill been to the wonder club yet? I'm very anxious to hear about that escapade. You now I've near you know I've never been there either although I've heard many a fancy story from those who have. I'm anxious to hear your impressions. When I get back we'll have to go together. It's practically sacrilege for anyone to live in New Orleans as long as we have and not be able to say that we've been there at least once. Haven't you been seeing the Riley's lately? It's been a long time since you mentioned them, what gives? Say I'm a little worried about the war bond situation. It is quite possible that they may freeze the bonds at the end of the war in Europe. We have too much money in them to take a chance on having our money where we couldn't touch it. I wish you would talk to Albert Kronacher (is that spelled right?) about taking the money we have in bonds and putting it in stable stocks like Am.Tel.&Tel. or, if the market is very high, into the postal savings. Stock in the big insurance companies is pretty stable as is Gen. Motors, U.S. Steel, etc.. In any event I think we should have our money someplace where we can be sure of being able to get it when we need it. Don't wait too long to decide about this and don't forget the bonds in Shreveport. Goodnight darling, I love you very much, Hews

Thursday, December 14, 1944, In a Military Hospital, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I have just finished three weeks in hospital today and I will go back to my company tomorrow. Fortunately the weather has moderated considerably. We have had no rain at all in the last three days which is something of a record for Normandy, I think. It hasn't even been cloudy. It has seemed good to see the sun shining brightly all day again. The sun doesn't have much effect on the temperature though. It is still mighty cold. I have plenty of warm clothes so I won't mind as long as I can keep dry. The days are awfully short here. It seems strange to me to see the sun as low at noon (in the south) as it is at four o'clock in the afternoon at home. Sunrise now is between 8:30 and 9:00 o'clock after a long slowly brightening dawn, and sunset is about 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon followed by a long period of twilight. It is quite dark at seven in the morning and at six in the evening. It will be good to get outdoors again. Three weeks is a long time to be cooped up in a tent without any change of scene and without any activity. I expect I'll rediscover my muscles the hard way again when I get back to work. I will have to take it easy though until my finger has healed completely so it may not be too painful a process. Goodnight sweetheart, I love you very much. Hews

Friday, December 15, 1944, Somewhere in Normandy, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Darling,

I'm out of the hospital at last and darned glad of it too. I got back to camp today just in time for lunch and it seemed like a banquet to me after being on short rations (and tasteless) in the hospital for so long. I lost weight during my stay in hospital and I still have a very sore stiff finger but I feel fine. We had good beef with rich barbecue sauce, English peas and boiled new potatoes and coffee. That coffee tasted especially good. I had nothing at all to drink in the hospital but tea – not even water – and it got very tiresome. The mailman was very good to me today. When I got back to the company I found a package and two letters from mother and dad, two letters from you, and one letter from 'Sis' dad's sister in Houston, waiting for me. After supper tonight we had a mail call and I got two more letters from you, one from mother, a Christmas card from Clara and another from Marie Threse Leblanc, a package of salt from you – still very useful - and two packages from mother

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and dad – Whew!! One of your letters had snapshots taken while mother and dad and Bob were in N.O. I surely did enjoy them but I was very disappointed not to find your picture among them. Next time please be sure to have yourself well represented. I mailed my watch to you today to be repaired. I guess you'd better take it back to Adler's. Tell them that I felt very disappointed when the case broke as it did. The watch was not dropped and did not get any shock that I consider unusual. The movement continued to function and kept good time after the case broke. As a matter of fact I don't know when it got broken. I discovered by accident that the case was broken on Nov. 10 which I think is within the one year guarantee. I noticed that the strap was loose and looked to see why. I found the break was causing the case to spring open and making the strap loose. Have the movement cleaned and adjusted while they are repairing the case. I couldn't find any marks on the case to indicate that it had had any unusual blow. Before you send the watch back, try to find a good stainless steel link strap for the watch. It would be much more practical than the flimsy leather cloth bands that I've been using. They wear out awfully fast and I'm not able to replace them over here. Thanks a lot for sending me the air mail stamps in your letters. They are hard to get over here just now, and I had just used my last one when your first one arrived. I just got your letters written during and just after the tonsillectomies. Tell Dorothy & Cecile that I certainly am proud of the way they behaved. I think that they were very brave good girls and I love them very much. I wish I could see you and them. This separation is harder to bear every day. I miss you every minute of every day and I want nothing so much as to be with you again permanently. It must end someday but now it seems like eternity. I still walk alone. There can be no one while I am away from you. It's late and I must get to bed – I go out on the job tomorrow and I need plenty of sleep. I got a pair of rubber boots today which will help in the mud. I love you, Hews

Sunday, December 17, 1944, Somewhere in Normandy, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Sweetheart,

I'm tired out tonight although we have had a holiday today. I have put in twelve hours today with French grammar and calculus. I worked on the French four hours this morning and spent the rest of the day on calculus. The calculus really gave me a headache. I'm working on some tough problems in maxima and minima that run into three unknowns and exponents as high as ten. I spent over two hours solving one fourth power equation. Sounds dull don't it, but its fascinating stuff to me. It gives me a sense of power and achievement to solve the obscure and complicated problems of calculus. I guess I wouldn't feel that way if calculus wasn't such a necessary part of my work.

There is much excitement in the car tonight. We have finally gotten a radio (we bought it at Claiborne with company funds) and it's set up in our car. It's the first time we have heard a radio since we left the states and it sounds mighty good to us. At first we listened to dance music and everyone was dancing and jiggling around or directing the orchestra and they were all giggling and acting crazy. You never have seen anyone more elated. Then Jack Benny's program was announced I thought they were really going crazy. Four of them rushed out the door, half-fell down the steps and began running up and down the track by the other cars yelling "Jack Benny is on the radio, come on every-body." The rest of them hung out the door and yelled or stomped up and down the aisle yelling. It was impossible to hear the radio until after the commercial was over then there was Rochester's voice somehow piercing the din in the car and the yelling changed to raucous, almost hysterical laughter and some of the men began pummeling their neighbors. As the program progressed they calmed down considerably but they remained an excessively responsive audience to the end. The program came through the BBX and now there is a very dull English program on so they have lost interest and lapsed into conversation. I've been writing this letter through it all and it's been a slow and much interrupted process. I worked in the field all day yesterday. I had to take it easy but everyone was sympathetic and helpful so I got along fine. I was pretty one-handed but I managed to be useful most of the time. It sure did feel good to be out working with the boys again. I had been cooped up too long in the hospital. I feel like I'm gaining my lost weight back now that I'm getting some decent food again. I have a prodigious appetite. You know (speaking of eating) it's odd that I haven't gotten the box of cookies you sent me. I think you sent it before you sent the salt which I got the other day. Well they should get here soon now. We are getting plenty of extra food now that the boxes have started to arrive from home. I had part of a delicious can of quail today and there is a nice assortment of candy and nuts etc. in the car. It's getting late now and the lights will soon be put out so I must get ready for bed. Please send me some more snapshots. Goodnight my darling. I love you very much, Hews

Monday, December 25, 1944, Somewhere in Normandy, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello darling, and my first merry Christmas this morning was for you dear. I slept late after being on guard but I still awakened even before the children got up to see what Santa Claus had brought for them. I could almost see their sparkling eyes as they opened their presents. What a moment to miss, I've been blue all day thinking about it. -- -- -- I've been sitting here for five minutes, unable to write another word, just thinking about the children on Christmas morning. I can imagine the scene so clearly. I'll bet the Christmas tree is in the middle of the sun porch. It is a fir tree about 7ft. tall with a big star on top. Its branches are laden with glistening colored balls and sparkling icicles and two – no three strings of colored lights. The base of the tree is swathed with cotton batting, sprinkled with artificial snow. Tucked away in the branches of the tree are little dolls and toy wagons, growing a little shabby now, that have been on the Christmas tree at our house every year

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since Bobby and I were very small children. The Christmas tree at mothers wouldn't be complete without them. Yesterday presents were piled around the base of the tree and tucked away in its branches. The children couldn't keep their hands off them and had to be reprimanded several times for pawing through the pile to see if they could find packages with their names on them and doing everything they could to find what was in their packages short of tearing off the paper. Then after supper everyone gathered around the tree and Papa began calling out the names and passing out the presents. He had to be coaxed a little to play Santa Claus but he would have been, secretly, very disappointed if anyone had taken his place. The children each got so many presents that they were unable to open them fast enough and soon each of them was surrounded by a pile of paper and ribbon and open boxes. Annette was soon glad to accept a little assistance in opening her presents and keeping them in order but Dorothy and Cecile insisted on opening all their presents unassisted. They were all glowing with awe at the magnificence and variety of their gifts and with the triumph of a vein monarch receiving the bounty of his subjects, who completely unconscious of any considerations of value given for the bounty received – and why not. Christmas is children's own day and their joyous happiness is value enough. Bedtime came and passed unnoticed – who could think of sleep in the midst of such bewilderingly exciting happiness. Finally though, the last package was opened and all presents were triumphantly compared. Then little eyes became heavy and, as fatigue began to replace excitement the children became cross and were soon glad to close the boxes and go to bed. Excitement kept them whisperingly awake for a little while but not for long. For all children know that Santa Claus cannot come until all children are sound asleep. This morning Cecile was the first one awake but she soon roused Dorothy and Annette and the three came in together to waken mommy as they had promised, before going in to see what additional wonderful presents Santa Clause could have thought of to crown the glory of their bounteous Christmas eve. They fairly floated as they crept in to the Christmas tree, half fearful that Santa Claus might have passed them, then bursting into an ecstasy of Joy at the sight of the unbelievable wonderful presents that had come in the night. It was like that wasn't it? Oh! My darling, how I have missed you all to day. I pray to god that we might be reunited soon. I love you with all my heart and all my life. Goodnight my star, Hews

Thursday, December 28, 1944, Somewhere in Normandy, Hews McCann, Jr.,

By Beautiful wife,

The nights are so lonely here. I lay in my bunk at night after the lights are put out and you possess me completely until sleep finally overcomes me. It is at night that I miss you most when there are no distractions to alleviate the poignant pain of being separated from you. At night that pain becomes a real physical pain that is as exquisite as the finest torture yet that is as nothing compared to the consciousness of the spiritual loss I must endure while we apart. During our years of happiness together you have become so completely essential to my spiritual well being that I am desolate without you. Yet I am consoled by the miracle of your love. I can never rest, away from you. There can be no comfort, no pleasure, no beauty for me while they cannot be shared with you. I lie in bed and close my eyes and try to see you – it is generally about time for you to be getting home from the office except on Thursdays when I see you going to town and on Fridays when we buy groceries together. I can never see anyone but you. We go home together and have supper then we go out together sometimes and sometimes we stay quietly at home. Then we go to bed and I go to sleep – I relive our life together in memory the while I am aching to be with you – to continue that happiness. There can be no happiness while we are apart, for me, for my happiness is you and you are far away. You are the sun that lights my life – I live in darkest desolation while we are apart. I love you, Hews

Friday, December 29, 1944, Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Darling,

The year 1944 is almost gone now. I hope that it will always live in my memory as the worst year of my life. It has been the worst year because the most calamitous possible event occurred – our separation. I hope and believe that 1945 will be the best year because we should be reunited before it has run its course. What a weary time of waiting there will be though before that joyous day of reunion arrives. The days drag by like weeks and the weeks like months. I have never felt the inexorable slowness of the passage of time as I do now. Yet it does go on and I go on living and breathing and eating and working and sleeping. But feeling is suspended. Memory provides a poor substitute for feeling but anticipation keeps me ready always for my return to you. When that grand day comes you may be sure that there will be no pangs of guilty conscience to mar the ecstasy of joy at our reunion. I will always be yours and yours alone. There can be no other attractions while your charms beckon and your love lives in my heart. I need your letters so badly. They are like a little fleeting touch of you. Yet they are denied to me time after time. For a full two weeks now I have not gotten a single letter. I hope that my letters are getting through to you. I know that you are writing and one fine day I will get your letters so keep writing often, please. Good night my sweetheart, I love you. Hews

Sunday, December 31, 1944, Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

Hello My Darling,

The old year's grinding machinery is about ground out now and is scheduled to be replaced with new improved machinery at midnight. It is claimed that the new tools are so designed that they can be changed over to produce peace times at a moments notice. This innovation, you will remember, was last tried thirty six years ago in the 1918 model. Although this model looked very promising on paper, the difficulties encountered in applying the theories practically were insurmountable and the model was never a success. It is said, however, that many innovations have been incorporated into the 1945 model based on a careful study of the faults which developed in the 1918 model as well as the contemporary factors related to the present economic and political situations. It is fervently to be hoped that the machinery will operate efficiently and economically. The claims made by the designers are very promising but may prove to be over-ambitious. They claim that the operating costs will be small, that maintenance costs will be held to a minimum and that their product can be depended on to continue to produce a high quality peace product for an indefinitely long period of time. So far, however, no definite plans or statistics have been forthcoming for scrutiny by the general public so it is impossible to form any definite opinions at this time. Until such time as we will be able to see this revolutionary machinery and to test the product which it produces it might be wise to watch developments hopefully but without allowing unsubstantiated claims to blind us to adverse possibilities. (Did you finally manage to wade through all that? I can't imagine why I did it, I just sat down and started writing and that's what came out.) I have spent the day working some very difficult calculus problems (they always pick the hardest problems) and I am about thought out. Many of the men have been celebrating exuberantly all day but I'm darned if I can see anything to be happy about. I feel miserable as hell with the Germans still fighting strong and no sign of peace in the near future. Of course the Germans made a last ditch attack just before they surrendered in 1918 and, this may be a similar situation. I hope it is. I don't see how I can stand being away from you much longer. My world revolves around you and when I am away from you I am all out of focus with the rest of the world. There's a big aching void in me that only you can fill and it won't be filled until we are together again. I'm living a half life in a half world and it's a mighty poor half. I'm living alone but I certainly don't like it. Oh darling I love you so much and there is so much happiness when we are together that life must always be empty when we are apart. I want nothing more than to be with you again. My only New Year's wish is to come back to you soon. But I wish that with all my heart and soul. We had mail call again today and I thought that I would surely get a letter from you this time but no such luck. I get awfully down in the dumps when I have to go so long without hearing from you. You can't imagine how much I need your letters and how big a lift they give me. I know that the A.P.O. is doing the best it can to get the mail through but that doesn't make me feel any better when my letters are delayed so long. I wish that I could get the earrings and combs that you asked me for but I don't know when I will be able to buy them. For security reasons we are restricted to our bivouac area except when we are out with work parties so I can't get into town at all. When the restriction is lifted I will be able to go to town on Sundays (our day off) and I may be able to find a shop open. I haven't mentioned the combs and earrings before in hopes that I might be able to tell you that I had gotten them. I haven't forgotten them though and you can be sure that I will get them for you as soon as possible. I must stop writing and get to bed – I am on guard tonight for two hours in the early morning and I have to go to work tomorrow. Goodnight my sweet. I love you very much. Kiss by babies for me and tell them that I love them too. Hews
P.S. Please send me a box of stationery.

Thursday, January 11, 1945, Somewhere in France, Hews McCann, Jr.,

Hello Darling,

We certainly will have a honeymoon when I get home. It will be a good long one too. At least a month. Take good care of the car and when I come back we will all pile in it (maybe Mildred too, huh? So we can be alone part of the time, and take off. The kids are big enough now to really get some good out of a long trip. I don't care where we go as long as we can all be together away from well meaning but superfluous relatives and friends. Gosh Honey! It will seem like heaven to be with you and the children again and be able to come and go as we like and always be together. We will patch up all the war-torn strings of our life during that honeymoon. We will have leisure then to really plan our future constructively and make our life together even happier and fuller than it was before the war. It's about time we were having a real honeymoon. We will soon celebrate our eighth wedding anniversary and we haven't officially had a honeymoon yet. It sounds odd to be chaperoned on your honeymoon by your three children doesn't it. I never missed the honeymoon though. All our days together seem like one long honeymoon to me. My love for you has increased continuously. The rest of our life together will be the same too. If you must have requests to show the P.O. here is one. Please send me something good to eat, three pr. of wool boot sox, some flashlight batt. Some cigarettes if you can find any. That enough for one request? Goodnight my darling, I love you with all my heart. Hews

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

7/15/1945, Shreveport, LA, Hews McCann, Sr. (Papa)

Dear Cile:

Well what is the latest on that new home, I know it will be quite a job to find something within your price range and at the same time to find something that meets with your approval, sure hope you get something in a good neighborhood that is in fairly good repair as you do not want to have to spend too much on repairs later on.

Sure hope you have received all of the tomatoes I sent you by Express in good shape, it has been such a pleasure to raise them and be able to sent you so many, much more that I sent last summer, it was truly a bumper crop, they are beginning to play out now but it is no wonder as they have produced so much already, and from such a few plants, I believe I could make money raising tomatoes, I have surely had lots of experience.

Our last letter from Hews Jr. was still from France and we were mighty glad but so sorry to hear they have so much dirt and dust, said it was almost useless to take a shower, he has gone through so much since he left home, I am so proud that he can talk French and act as interpreter, Hews is a good student and his knowledge of French may stand him in good stead one of these days.

We had a nice service at St. Marks this morning, music went real well although I did not care so much for the Anthem, we have such a splendid leader in Mr. Walters, sure hope he will stay with us he has a wonderful future here at St. Marks, the church is going to have a barbecue tonight in the yard back of the Parish House, wish you and the children were here to go with us, it will be similar to the supper the children had at Christ's Church when we were down there.

I do not believe Clara is any better, I suppose mother has told you she has Cancer, we do not want Clara or Mrs. Brock to know about it, she is taking x-ray treatments but I believe that only retards the disease, I remember it did not do Papa any good, Florence looks terrible as usual, is perfectly miserable at home and almost despises her father, it is a bad situation.

Love

Dad

8/1/1945, Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

Dear Baby Cecile,

These kitties are trying to read your letter. Now I wonder what they think it says? Do you remember the kitties you had in Vicksburg (MS)? Are you and Mike having a good time playing? I am putting a dime in your letter so you can take him to the drug store and buy an ice cream cone for you and one for Mike too. What do you and Mike play? Do you have a swing now? Soon you will be going back to school and then you will have lots of playmates. Does Mike start school too? If he doesn't, he and Annette will be lonesome with you and Dorothy away all day. You will have to teach them the stories and songs you learn won't you?

Lots of love,

Grannie

EMPLOYEE'S EARNINGS STATEMENT		CONSOLIDATED VULTEE AIRCRAFT CORPORATION NEW ORLEANS DIVISION NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA			
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	NAME OF EMPLOYEE	PERIOD ENDING	DEPT. EMPLOYEE NO.	AMOUNT OF DEDUCTIONS	TOTAL EARNINGS
370018	C N MCCANN	8-12-45	24347665		6456
400	OVER TIME 912			113	
360	GR INS			425	
65	FED TAX AND CAB				
NOT NEGOTIABLE					
THIS STUB SHOULD BE PRESERVED AS A RECORD OF YOUR EARNINGS FOR SOCIAL SECURITY AND INCOME TAX PURPOSES.					
DETACH THIS STUB BEFORE PRESENTING FOR PAYMENT					
DETACH HERE					

8/17/1945, New Orleans, LA, Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation,

To Whom It May Concern:

Mrs. Cecile McCann entered the Tool Design Department of Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation on September 6, 1943.

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

At the time of termination of our contract she was doing Class B design work specializing in designing and detaining large jigs and fixtures.

This is to inform you that she has performed the work in her classification to our satisfaction.

Yours truly,

Charles C. Lord, Supervisor Tool Design

Wilton R. Bosch, Assistant Supervisor Tool Design

October 4, 1945, New Orleans, LA, Cecile Nelken McCann

Hello, My sweet husband,

I had such nice mail today – three good letters. I'm so glad you found such a good camera, and are having such a time snapping away. I'll get some more film for you tomorrow. 35mm is quite plentiful. Would you like some developing powders too? Or shall we keep on trusting that to Bennetts? They're giving pretty rapid service now. You know what you should do? Keep a list, numbered 1 – thru the roll, of the dates and objects your pictures are of. Then when I have the films printed, I'll know what I'm looking at. Could you do that?

The money order for Teresa Thn's perfume came, too, and I'll tend to that Saturday. I'll get her something nice.

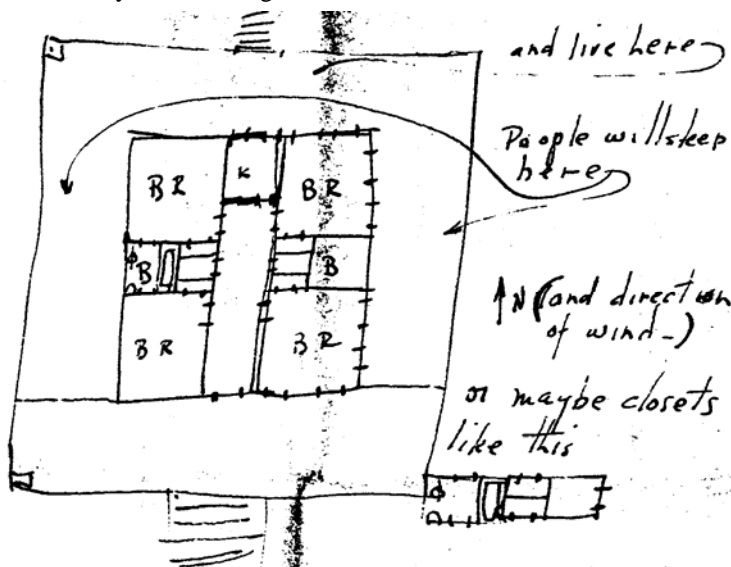
I stayed up awfully late last night. The children & I went to visit Mother & John last night for an hour, since Sandy phoned and said it was too dull there with no children around. Mom gave me a book called "Till the Boys Come Home," about a duration – widow and her friends, and when I once started it, I couldn't put it down. By & large, I've managed better than she did, and I didn't do the things she did, but we have certainly thought some of the same thoughts and felt some of the same feelings. There were moments when I thought someone had been peeking under my skin. You probably can't get it over there – it would be very bad for the morale of overseas forces, but you can read it when you get home. Quite a book, quite a book.

Oh, darling, I miss you so. I want to hold you close, close to me, and feel your wonderful hands caressing my body. I want to taste your mouth again, and feel the smoothness and strength of your body against mine. I want you to take my clothes off of me again, and pick me up in your arms and carry me to bed. And I want to see the sweet, wild, tender look in your eyes that is there when all thought has left your mind but the thought of loving me. Tonight my whole body is aching for the touch of yours.

It's strange – I would have said I had all but forgotten what it is to be loved by you – or any man, for that matter. No man has looked at me with the sharpness of desire in so long that I had almost forgotten the look of it. I would even had said that I had forgotten how to love you with my body. But I haven't. Since your beautiful passionate letters have started to come, they have waked me till I not only have that nebulous, constant ache of longing for your presence, but I know just exactly what I'm missing. I want to touch you, darling. I want to talk to you, yes, but I want to talk to you with my head in your lap, or with your arms around me, or lying close to you in bed. Oh, darling, I'll be so very happy to have you home again.

I think, tho, that I shall send you a Christmas box – just a token one – just in case. If you're home and don't get it, it won't matter. If you're not home, it will be something you can enjoy, and we'll have our real Christmas when you come. Oh, dearest, I want to buy you a loud tie, and some brilliant sox, and a pair of red, white and blue shorts (Long may it wave!).

I love you something fierce,



Leona Bernhard's Proposed Grand Isle House

Cecile

October 16, 1945, New Orleans, LA, Cecile Nelken McCann

Darling,

I am now in communication with the adjutant gen'l's office. Major Gen'l E. F. Witsell wrote me a very nice letter, telling me he had had a letter from Overton, & the procedures to follow to obtain a dependency discharge for you. I wrote back and told him you now have enuf points (time and type of service) – so? And what the situation is in the sixth army. Who knows – it might help a little.

You have such cute children. Dorothy was reading us a story tonight after dinner, and Annette, who just can't keep still, was sitting on my stomach and "doctoring" me. First she stuffed both my ears with newspaper. Then she unbuttoned my blouse and stuffed paper around in my brassiere and thumped with her finger

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as if with a stethoscope. All the while neech (sp) "How you feel now? Come on, Mommy!" (very weeding voice). "That's a good girl, Mommy!"

Then Cile informed me that she is failing reading, Miss Landry says, because she doesn't read at home. So she proceeded to read her new lesson – with perhaps two mistakes.

I sent you an awfully nice box of food yesterday – just in case.

And I got my camera back. Now I can take some cheesecake pictures for you – huh, sweetie? And the car's oil filter is fixed, and I have my watch again. So now there is only the crystal for the radio and the refrigerator to worry about. And it's cold enuf now that the refrigerator stays plenty cold on just ice. So the world – my mechanical world – is getting straightened out.

What do you think of Sam? Isn't this something? I'll send you further developments as they occur.

As for the house on Grand Isle – Mother wants four bedrooms, two baths. Porch all around, and a wide hall in the center that could be used for sitting in bad weather. Porch to be screened on sides and back. The house must be high – at least seven feet above ground, and faces the gulf, from which comes the prevailing wind. There's plenty of space, so that's no hindrance – but the construction should be as strong (hurricanes) and economical as possible. Provide a kitchen. Here's an idea I had – You can probably improve on this. Oh – and they want a shower under the house for sand or bathhouse. Well, time for me to go to bed.

Goodnight, my dearest one – I love you - Cecile

11/11/1945, Shreveport, LA, Dorothy Brock McCann (Granny)

Dear Cecile:

My I have most forgotten how to write have neglected doing so at any rate. It was so good to talk to you the other evening. It always gives me assurance that you and the children are alright when I hear your voice.

No mail came from Hews last week. Surely we will hear in a few days now. I read in the paper yesterday about some activities in Osaka by the Sixth Army so they have arrived. I have been feeling good thinking I had finished my Christmas buying for the children but I find I am beset with doubt as to some of my selections. For instance, I have decided the xylophone will be a task instead of pleasure so have decided against it. How I wish you could be with me to help me make selections. Haven't had time to get out to see if I can get a reduction on the desk. I surely hope the man will come down for it is odd as well as sturdy and I believe Dorothy will like it. You have not said what Mama Cecile would like. How about a hint or two?

We went to an Armistice program this afternoon. The speaker was from Kansas City, MO. And very good. He had some good points but nothing especially workable. Of course his thought was the way to prevent World War No. III.

Clara has had several bad days the past week but yesterday and today she shows improvement. She is making big plans about what she is going to do when he gets back home. There surely is no give up in her.

Yesterday the Overdyhes picked me up and rode me to town. They are very bitter toward the army officials – the government leaders and every one who might have anything to do with our boys. Don is still in Germany and has had nothing to do since VE day. His points are way over the required number but he is not permitted to come home. Their line of talk would be funny if it were not so serious with them. I thought LaRue was about the most rabid person I knew but have decided the Overdyhes are alone runners up. Of course I add my feelings when I can get a word in which is not often.

Have you been reading about the broader GI Bill of rights. It is to take in all ages and the allotment is to be larger, than at first planned. So many boys here are working during the day and attending Centenary night school. That way they manage fairly well. However, I wonder if they can find enough time to prepare lessons.

Dad has vacation coming so he is planning to be off Christmas week. I am so glad he can be home to enjoy the fun with you and the children. We will have Christmas in December as usual and another one when Hews gets home.

All my love,
Mom

November 13, 1945, New Orleans, LA, Cecile Nelken McCann,

Darling –

John said to send this on for you to use in any way you may need to. There is always a chance that the orders may go astray, in which case maybe you can wave this letter at people. In fact, the orders should reach your area before my letter, shouldn't they? Anyhow, let me know right away that you have received this letter. I'll be waiting for word that it hasn't been lost. In any case, John has the copy. Gen'l Berry sent him, so we have that to refer to in writing back if no action has been taken about you. Oh, darling – I just can't wait for you to get home!

I had a letter from you today – the one you wrote aboard the LST. Oh, it was so good to hear from you at last. And the rolls of German film arrived today, too. I'm anxious to see how those turned out. Clearer than the Dover, I hope.

I went with Mother & John to hear Bidu Sayas & Charles Kullman sing last night. It was a pleasant evening, though I have certainly out grown my enjoyment of singing concerts – at least most of them. Swigersail's usually more interested in

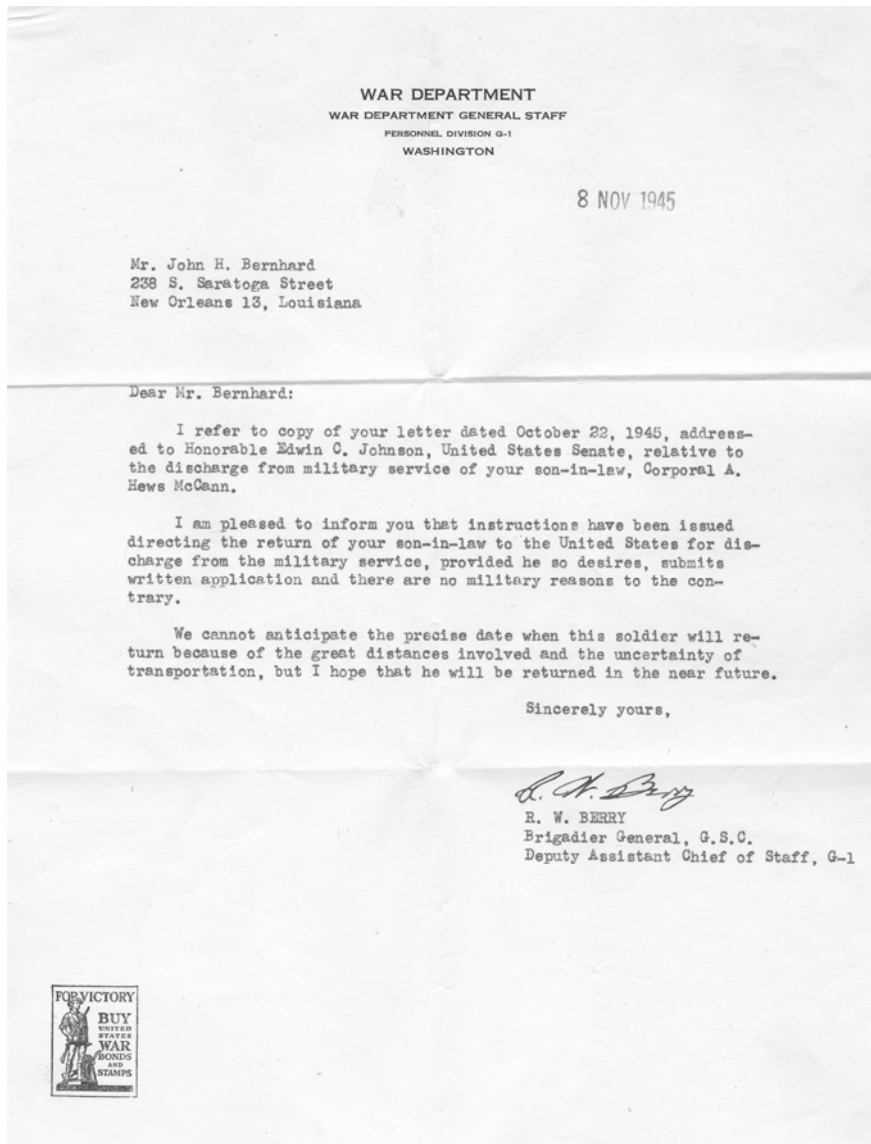
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the performance of their instruments (their voices) than in the musicality of the numbers they perform. I'm not. Anyhow, it was pleasant to get out, and I saw some people I know and many I didn't, and some strange and wonderful things in the line of female dress and coiffures. Dagnay said the other day that she loves to go to concerts in New Orleans. When she does, she not only gets a chance to see the latest high fashions but she also gets to see a review of high fashion for the last twenty years. Which is an under estimate. I saw Mrs. Parsons last night in a dress I know dated back to 1910. It has the same period as that photograph we have of Mother as a young girl.

Annette had a pretty good birthday today, I think. At least I was able to supply her with all the accoutrements, which was a neat trick. I left a few minutes before six this afternoon and stopped by to buy her a cake and ice cream for supper. They have certainly murdered that cake, too.

Darling, I'm getting to sleepy to write. I must bathe & get to bed.

I love you,
Cecile



8 Nov 1945, War Department

War Department General Staff
Personnel Division G-1
Washington, R. W. Berry
Brigadier General, G.S.C.
Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, Mr.
John H. Bernhard
238 S. Saratoga Street
New Orleans 13, Louisiana

Dear Mr. Bernhard:

I refer to copy of your letter dated October 22, 1945, addressed to Honorable Edwin C. Johnson, United States Senate, relative to the discharge from military service of your son-in-law, Corporal A. Hews McCann.

I am pleased to inform you that instructions have been issued directing the return of your son-in-law to the United States for discharge from the military service, provided he so desires, submits written application and there are no military reasons to the contrary.

We cannot anticipate the precise date when this soldier will return because of the great distances involved and the uncertainty of transportation, but I hope that he will be returned in the near future.

Sincerely yours,

R. W. Berry Brigadier General, G.S.C.
Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1

World War II letters, 1943-1945, from A. Hews McCann, Jr. to Cecile N. McCann and from Family

29th Nov. 1945, Camp near Chambaran, Lucien Christelle,

Dear Mrs. McCann,

It's a great pleasure for me to write you that letter and to thank you by the same way for the gifts you sent to my parents and all my family. As you know perhaps, I'm now a soldier, far from the house, but I can tell you how happy were my parents when they've seen how Americans did not forget their friends.

I was last week at home, eight days are perhaps long for people who wait; sure they're not for a soldier who find his home again. I suppose now your husband at home, though I write him a letter to his military address, during the days I spent at Mourmelon. I received a letter from him and a small card from "The Reader's Digest" to inform me I had a subscription for a year as a gift from Albert. I thank him very much too for this gift which is indeed a very fine one.

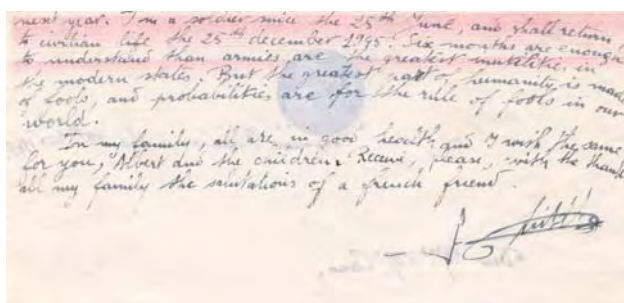
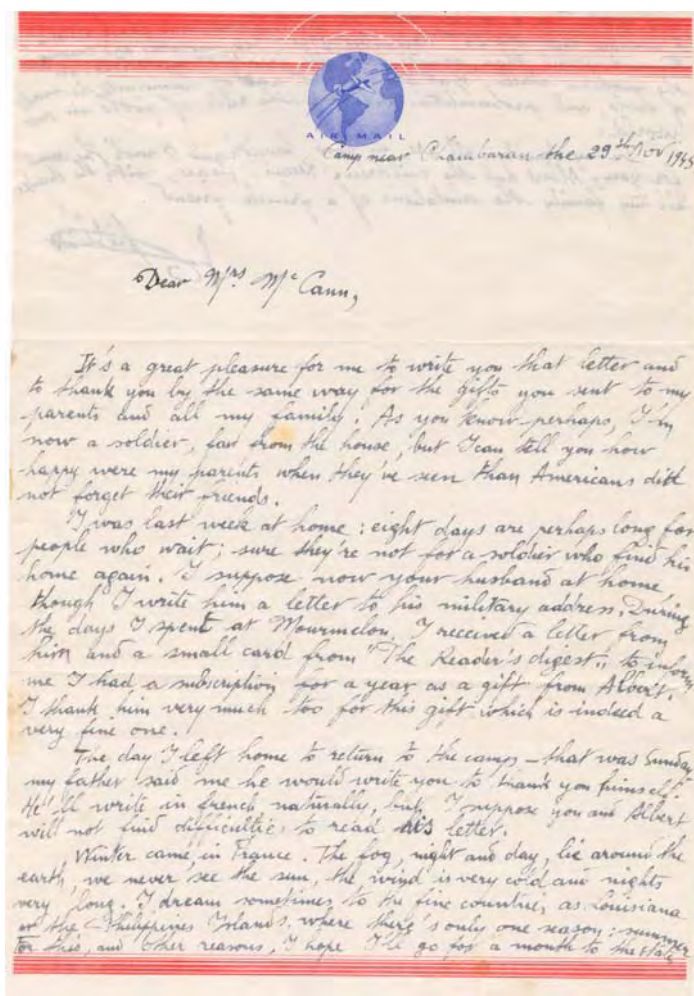
The day I left home to return to the camp – that was Sunday, my father said me he would write you to thank you himself. He'll write in French naturally, but I suppose you and Albert will not find difficulties to read his letter.

Winter came, in France. The fog, night and day, lie around the earth, we never see the sun, the wind is very cold and nights very long. I dream sometimes to the fine countries as Louisiana at the Philippines Islands where there's only one season, summer. For this, and other reasons, I hope I'll go for a month to the states next year. I'm a soldier since the 25th June, and shall return to civilian life the 25th December 1945. Six months are enough to understand than armies, are the greatest inutihtri (?) in the modern states. But the greatest part of humanity is made of fools, and probabilities are for the rule of fools in our world.

In my family, all are in good health and I wish the same for you, Albert and the children. Receive, please, with the thanks all my family the salutations of a French friend.

L. Christelle

29th Nov. 1945, Camp near Chambaran, Lucien Christelle,



*December, 5 1946, Hews McCann, Jr.
was discharged from the Army.*