

Taken From: *I'll Be Back: World War II Letters to The Home Front* by Harold Freedlander
pages 74-76

Somewhere in England
January 16, 1945

Sweetheart,

I see by the *Stars and Stripes* that the Cleveland Electric Company has been taken over by the government after a disgraceful strike. Having been so proud of Ohio's war record, Yates, Uffner, and I are taking quite a beating from the boys for this strike—at a time when every nerve is being strained over here. What in the hell is the matter with those people anyhow? I don't want to be unreasonable, but from this distance it certainly stinks. Other news from home that sounds interesting is that you girls will be wearing more abbreviated clothing this summer. This is a release straight from the garment district according to *Stars & Stripes*. I don't see how they could be more abbreviated than some of the local yokels wore last summer.

The Daily Records up to the 16th of December came today—a whole flock of them. Freedlander's ad looked good this Christmas. I didn't see much in the personals that interested me. I did notice where Ken Rhode got a promotion in the Navy.

I haven't told you about the English money. We are quite adept at it now, not having had American money since we got here. The English have a penny (pence they call it) which is worth 1-2/3 cents American money. Twelve pence makes a shilling (20 cents), twenty shilling makes a pound (\$4.00). The actual coins are a half-penny (pronounced by our British friends something like aypenny); a penny; a three-pence (pronounced thrupence) which is worth an American Nickel; a six-pence (worth a dime); a shilling (20 cents). Above the basic shilling is a florin (2 shilling piece); a half-crown (2 ½ shillings—50 cents); a crown (5 shillings—\$1.00 and rarely used); a ten shilling note (\$2.00 bill); and the pound note. There are undoubtedly larger bills. The half-penny is copper colored and about the size of a quarter. The penny same color, the size of a half dollar. The three-pence is hexagonal in shape and shinier copper. The sixpence is almost a dead ringer for a dime (which is exactly what it's worth). The shilling is silver and the size of a quarter. The florin is between a quarter and half dollar in size and also silver. The half-crown in same size, color, and weight almost as the half dollar. The crown is gold and they are struck off only on great occasions such as a coronation, birth of an heir presumptive to the throne, or the marriage of one of the immediate royal family. The ten shilling note is much wider than our dollar bill but about the same length. The pound note is same width but a little longer. And that is your lesson. It sounds funny at our blackjack or rummy games to hear Babbitt, Joe, or myself say "raise you one and three" (1 shilling, three-pence—25 cents). English cigarettes are lousy and very expensive—they cost 2 and 3 for 20. Guess how much? Exactly! 45 cents. At the Red Cross we get meals for 1 and 3 and pay 2 shillings for a bed for the night. A movie cost you anywhere from 1 and 3 to 2 and 9 (25 cents to 55 cents) depending upon where you sit. The best seats are the front of the balcony (called the upper circle over here), next is the rear of the balcony, the rear of the main floor (orchestra seats are referred to as stalls), and last the cheapest seats are the front of the stall section.

One night last week Sam, Terry, and I went into town (still can't tell you which one), and there was a dance at the Red Cross so we stopped by. It amazed me the way these English girls

jitterbug. They are real fanatics about it—I saw fellow who couldn't do it left right in the middle of the floor. They're catching on fast.

I imagine this will reach you between our anniversary and your birthday. Darling, you know that I am thinking what you are thinking now because when people are happy together, anniversaries and birthdays too don't call for an artificial outpouring. I won't love you a bit more on those days than I do today or will twenty years from now—or fifty if we're still here. But I'll love you as much as I can possibly love anyone. I won't wish you a happy anniversary and birthday because they aren't happy. I send you my fondest love and the old story that you will be my beloved forever. This temporary sensation will be over and will fade into the past—but you will always be the bride I held in my arms the 23rd of January 1939. And your birthdays to me are just an excuse to show you how much you mean to me. I'm as hopelessly in love as I was six years ago and will be forever.

I love you my darling, for all of my life,

Harold